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LABOUR AND LUXURY.

A REPLY TO

“MERRIE ENGLAND.”

By NEMO.

“There is a safe and a dangerous Socialism before us. And of all our public wants none is so urgent as wise teaching about the limits and the consequences of these two.”—FREDERICK HARRISON.

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PREFACE.



THIS little book has been written with the object of exposing some of the errors and fallacies frequently to be met with amongst large numbers of workmen at the present day. It is especially addressed to the younger and more intelligent members of the Independent Labour Party and Fabian Society, who may perhaps never have had the "other side" of the social and industrial question fairly and reasonably put before them. If in any way the following pages may serve to throw new light on our industrial situation, or pour oil on the troubled waters of English society, the author will think himself well rewarded.

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LABOUR AND LUXURY.

I.

THE LIFE OF THE WORKERS.

“There is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides; it is when they attend only to one, that errors harden into prejudices, and truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth by being exaggerated into falsehood.”—*J. S. Mill, “On Liberty.”*

“According as prosperity began to dawn in France previous to the Revolution, men’s minds began to become more unquiet and disturbed; public discontent was sharpened; hatred of all ancient institutions went on increasing, until the nation was visibly on the verge of a revolution. One might almost say, that the French found their condition all the more intolerable, according as it became better.”—*De Tocqueville, “France before the Revolution.”*

DEAR “NUNQUAM,”—You have written a book called “Merrie England,” which I read some six weeks ago, and which, I believe, has been very widely read by working people.

You have therein addressed your remarks and expounded your views to an imaginary opponent—John Smith, of Oldham—whom you satirically call “a staunch Liberal,—a shrewd, hard-headed, practical man,—with a habit of calling loudly for Facts in a peremptory

manner, like a stage brigand calling for Wine, and with a trick of not being able to see beyond his free and independent nose at election times!"

Now my name is *not* Smith; neither am I a "staunch Liberal," nor am I anxious to earn the exceedingly dubious compliment of being called "hard-headed"; but I flatter myself I am fairly shrewd; I have a pious respect for facts; and I think I can see beyond the length of my free and independent nose at election or any other time.

Under these circumstances, "Nunquam," as you are a representative Socialist, and also seem to have some "grit," or good mettle in you, and as you have stated the case for Socialism with much force and ability, I mean now to argue the point with you (although you *are* the editor of a newspaper); and in doing so shall stick to the hardest of hard facts, and appeal to that robust love of fairplay and common-sense for which we as a nation are remarkable.

For I too am "a plain, practical man, and base my beliefs on what I know and see." I ask you, then, to forget me, and consider my arguments on their merits. I ask you, moreover, to forget yourself—that is to say, to try and free yourself as much as possible from prejudice and class feeling.

Forget, then, that you are a miner, a spinner, or a journalist; a Catholic, Nonconformist, or Freethinker; a Conservative, Radical, or Socialist, and consider the problem as a *man*. I ask you then, in turn, to hear

what I have to say, and decide by your own judgment whether I am right or wrong.

With this preliminary, let us "get a gate," as we say in Yorkshire; let us try and get a "right, fair understanding" about this pressing problem of Socialism; let us tackle it, turn it inside out, carefully examine the statements you Socialists make, see where you are right and where you are wrong, and finally come to a conclusion of the whole matter.

And, first, let me frankly confess, right off, that I am in cordial agreement with much that you say. For sure enough it is that this same England of ours, which was once called "merrie," is now at the present date become in many respects sorely "out of joint." Something does indeed seem "rotten in the state of Denmark." "Large numbers of women and children are," as you state, "enduring much misery and wrong. Large numbers of honest and industrious people are badly fed, badly clothed, and badly housed; many thousand people die of preventable diseases every year. Very many people, after lives of toil, are obliged to seek a refuge in the workhouse. The hours of labour are long; the work is monotonous, mechanical, and severe; and the surroundings are very often disagreeable, unhealthy, and dangerous."* Manufacturing towns, with their dirt, their gloom, and their ugliness, do indeed to some extent merit the uncomplimentary title given to them by Socialists of "dismal hell-holes."

* "Merrie England," pp. 37, 38.

And when we turn to the life that is lived in them we cannot help seeing that it is very often but a poor, drudging, anxious affair, far from satisfactory at best.

Houses.—In the first place, the houses many of our workers inhabit are mean, dark, and overcrowded. I see you quote Thorold Rogers, "Nunquam," on page 37; but I think he rather over-states the case, when he says that "the people live in *squalid dens*, where there can be no health and no hope, but dogged discontent at their own lot, and futile discontent at the wealth which they see possessed by others." Squalid dens some of the people do live in no doubt, but certainly not the majority of them. I am quite ready to agree with you that the single and double-room tenements are, when occupied by families, "unfit for human habitation," and that even the abodes of the more fortunate artisans are not what they should be. Moreover, there is a dull, uniform design, or rather want of design about them, very depressing to look at; every house being exactly like its neighbour, and every street the exact counterpart of the one next to it. Buggins the builder has blighted it all; and the women, whose fancies and tastes for decorating their persons are as varied, insatiable, and capricious as a monkey's, seem to be quite content to live in a house like a brick wall, with holes therein for windows, and with never a bit of taste or decoration about it whatever.

And when we go *inside* the house and contemplate

the life of "Mrs. Smith," we are apt to stand aghast somewhat at the sight of what goes on there; "the hideous furniture, the still more hideous cooking, the washing, cleaning, scrubbing, etc." To the unsophisticated sense of the average savage, such a life would appear a perfect nightmare! As you very truly say, "Nunquam," "Mrs. Smith is an excellent woman, but she does not know what cookery means. Oh! the soddened vegetables, the flabby fish, the leathery steak, and the juiceless joint,—I know them. Alas! cookery is an art, and a lost art in this country; or shall we say an art unfound. Poor Mrs. Smith gets married, and faces the pasteboard and the oven with the courage of desperation and the hope of ignorance. She resembles the young man who had never played the fiddle, but had no doubt he could play if he tried." * Yes, I am afraid what you say about good Mrs. Smith's cooking is, in general, true; and "pity 'tis, 'tis true."

Dress.—And in the matter of clothes again, I, to a great extent, agree with you. "Those deadly hats and bonnets, those awful black bugles, that general drabness, are things too sad for tears."† Those deplorable feathers and tropical birds, too, with which Mrs. Smith will persist in adorning her head, after the fashion of the North American Indians, and that fatal affinity for wearing discordant and incongruous colours, are alike painfully characteristic of her want of taste. And yet, though we have not the natural instinctive good taste of the French,

* "Merrie England," p. 40.

† "Merrie England," p. 40.

there is no doubt that our taste is improving, in spite of the vulgar, sham, make-believe, imitation materials that ape so much and fail so miserably.

Furniture.—With regard to furniture too, I think your remarks are generally correct. Mrs. Smith does too often crowd her rooms with it, as you say; and much of it is very ugly and very unnecessary. In this she might certainly take a lesson from Japan with advantage. Also she might with even greater advantage consider whether, on the whole, it would not be advisable to make more real *use* of that front parlour of hers, which she is so proud and jealous of. I know what a source of pride this parlour is to the better paid artisan; but is there not some rather foolish pretentiousness here, in sacrificing so much badly-wanted chamber space to mere appearances of respectability? People who only have two rooms on the ground-floor can hardly afford to keep one of them untenanted six days in the week.

But on Mrs. Smith and her little weaknesses we must not be too hard, for is not her life almost, as you say, "Nunquam," "a long slavery"? "Cooking, cleaning, managing, mending, washing, scrubbing, waiting on husband and children, her work is never done. And amidst it all she suffers the pains and anxieties of bearing and suckling children."* Poor Mrs. Smith is indeed not to be envied. When one looks upon her daily task, one wonders how any girl has pluck enough to marry and face so drudging a future!

* "Merrie England," p. 42.

Recreation.—Lastly, with regard to recreation, though I can't quite admit that "our working men have hardly anything to amuse them," I certainly think the lack of open spaces, play-grounds, commons, etc., where cricket, football, and tennis could be played, is a very deplorable defect in the life of our large manufacturing towns. When, again, you say that "music, art, athletics, science, the drama, and nature are almost denied the workers,"* you will pardon me, if I say you exaggerate; but when you insist on the necessity of more fields and play-grounds for our boys and girls to play in and develop their growing frames, I am fully with you there. For *Mens sana in corpore sano* is a true proverb, but one we too frequently neglect; and if we want to see our coming generation stronger, healthier, and happier than ourselves, we must see that they have room to run and play about in.

Music.—More music, too, and better, should be supplied the people. Every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, and every warm summer evening, a really good municipal band of from thirty to forty performers should play in the public parks of every town of England. Municipal baths, wash-houses, and dining halls, too, should be started in all our towns and large villages, not to destroy private enterprise, but to set it an example; whereby much of our friend Mrs. Smith's drudgery might possibly be spared, and the wholesome influence of the social or communal life might gradually be

* "Merrie England," p. 42.

brought to bear on the too jealous, narrow, and exclusive domesticity of to-day. We do not want Communism in its entirety, but we want more of the communal spirit introduced into the daily domestic lives of the workers.

For, after all, as you say, "Nunquam," "The great nation is not the nation with the most wealth, but the nation with the best men and women,"* happy, healthy handsome, and good. What the few fine examples of humanity now are, we should endeavour to level up the great mass of the people to eventually become in the future; and we can only do so by first giving them natural conditions in which to develop their better qualities. I am no great admirer of the Factory System, though I cannot join you in bombastically abusing it as a "hideous, false, and futile thing." Still I think, with you, that it is certainly ugly; injurious to public health; and dangerous to national existence; and were England to become, as men of the "Manchester school" prophesy, the "workshop of the world," I, for one, should go and live in Turkey. Surely we have already quite sufficiently polluted and desecrated our fair country with foul air, filthy streams, and hideous overgrown manufacturing towns, without wishing to desecrate it still more! No; rather our aim should be to gradually become more self-supporting, more *natural* in fact; to lessen the altogether *overgrown* and monstrous number of our town artisans, and increase the number of those working on the land.

* "Merrie England," p. 46.

But whilst I am thus fully alive to the evil side of the Factory System, and whilst I agree with you in many things, "Nunquam,"—in your denunciations of sweating, of luxury, of unrestricted competition, of the sacrifice of everything to cheapness, etc. (all which topics I will refer to more fully later on),—still there are some ideas and statements of yours which I cannot agree with, and which, indeed, I am astonished you should even give utterance to. It is all very well to denounce the evils of our present economic and industrial system; but you seem to me to go "one better," as they say, and pour out the vials of your wrath on good and bad in it alike. You remind me of the man who said, "Nothing like a radical cure, when he cut his little boy's head off to mend him of squinting."

Things are pretty bad, I allow; but really, to read "Merrie England," one would think that laughter had died out entirely from amongst us, and we were all going to dissolve in tears! You have, in fact, laid on your dark colours a bit too strong; sometimes, indeed, so strong, that one cannot help surmising your tongue has been in your cheek occasionally, whilst trying to see how much "that silly fellow, John," really could be made to swallow.

As, therefore, some of your assertions, though bold and sweeping, are in my opinion very misleading, and likely to give your readers a wrong impression, I will here examine them a little closely, and see whether they will bear investigation.

II.

PAST AND PRESENT.

"The working class improvement is largely due to Trade Union efforts. It has been slow, terribly slow, and *it is not so apparent to the younger generation* as to those whose age and experience take them back to the forties and fifties of the present century; but it has nevertheless been real and substantial."—*Howells*, "*Capital and Labour*."

"The Radical and Socialist's weakness is that he does not know enough of the facts of other times."—*J. Morley*.

"The more carefully we examine the past, the more reason shall we have for dissenting from those who imagine that our age is fruitful of new social evils. That which is new is the intelligence and humanity that remedies them."—*Macaulay*.

"We are singularly little sensible as a nation of the extraordinary good luck which has befallen us since the beginning of the century."—*Sir Henry Maine*.

YOU start your first chapter, for instance, by saying there is a Problem before us, which you call the "Problem of Life." This Problem, you say, is as follows:—"Given a Country and a People, find how the People may make the best of the Country and of themselves.

"First, then, as to the capacities of the country and the people.

"The country is fertile and fruitful, well stored with nearly all things the people need.

"The people are intelligent, industrious. *strong*, and famous for their perseverance, inventiveness, and resource.

"It looks then as if such a people, in such a country, must certainly succeed in securing health and happiness and plenty for all.

"But we know very well that our people, or, at least, *the bulk* of them*, have neither health nor pleasure nor plenty.

"These are facts; and so far I assume you and I are quite in accord."†

All I can say in reply to this, "Nunquam," is that you assume too much; that we are not in accord; and that the facts are very questionable ones.

In the first place, how can you come to state in one sentence that the people are strong, and in the very next that they have no health?

How can a man be strong and unhealthy at the same time? Perhaps you will explain.

In the second place, how do you reconcile your statements with that of the greatest living authority on the poor?

Mr. Charles Booth (no relation to the General) estimates the population of London, where most poverty exists, as follows:—

* The italics are mine.

† "Merrie England," p. 11.

						Population. Per cent.
Poor	...	...	...	...	...	25
Well-to-do workers			...	...	...	50
Rich and middle class	...			...	...	25

And this estimate of Mr. Booth's would seem to be confirmed by the Census report of last year, where we learn that 54 per cent. of the people live in five-roomed houses and upwards, 23 per cent. in four-roomed houses, 11 per cent. in three-roomed houses, 8 per cent. in two, and 2 per cent. in one-roomed houses; which facts certainly go to prove that it is a *minority* and *not* a *majority* of the people who are badly housed and poor; and that when you assert that the *bulk* of the people are badly housed, clothed, and fed, you are obviously exaggerating and misrepresenting the true state of affairs; you are, in fact, painting the devil blacker than he is.

That there is a deplorable amount of misery and poverty in our big cities I am only too well aware, and that we should set to work at once to make a steady, dead-lift effort to remove it as soon as possible, is what every good Christian must agree to.

But whilst thinking thus upon the unsatisfactory state of the present, let us not forget the still more unsatisfactory condition of the past, out of which we have emerged.

"The Radical's weakness," says John Morley, "is that he does not know enough of the facts of other times;"

in our eagerness to better the present, we are all too apt to forget the past.

And yet, though Socialists either ignore or abuse the past, and wax violently indignant with it, we ourselves cannot disconnect ourselves from it; and it is indeed just about as monstrous and unnatural to abuse the past, as it would be to abuse and kick our grand-parents. Let us then glance back fifty years, and compare life then with life now.

Fifty years ago you might have said with justice that the bulk of our people were "badly clothed, badly housed, and badly fed;" * but you cannot say that with equal justice to-day.

You may wish to excite discontent amongst the people with their present position, by exaggerating the evils thereof, but you cannot go against facts, which both Mr. Charles Booth and the late Census report bring forward.

Fifty years ago bread was more than double its present price! Tea and sugar also cost then about double what they do now; whilst all other sorts of food, with the single exception of meat, were considerably cheaper than they are to-day.

Clothing, too, is now from about half to one-third its price fifty years ago. Clogs are fast dying out; wages are higher; life is longer; crime has decreased.

Twenty-five years ago there were 15,000 convicted criminals during the twelvemonth. In 1892 there

* "Merrie England," p. 37.

were only 9000, in spite of the largely increased population.

Twenty-five years ago there were over a million paupers. There are now only three-quarters of a million; and if we go back to an earlier date, we shall be astonished at the decrease in the number of the poor and destitute.

In 1795, almost exactly a century ago, Eden* tells us that some towns in England had one-third of their inhabitants depending on the poor-rates, which varied from 1s. 6d. to 9s. ! These are facts.

Meantime, whilst Pauperism and Crime have thus been diminishing (see Blue Book reports), the population has been increasing fast. In 1854 it was 27 millions. It is now 38 millions.

Moreover, the people have many more opportunities of enjoyment than in former days.

Fifty years ago there were no Free Libraries; no Free News-rooms; no free Picture Galleries; no Free Education. Hospitals, Asylums, Convalescent Homes, etc., for the most part then built and supported by the voluntary gifts and donations of the rich and well-to-do, have developed enormously during recent years. Public Parks have been presented to the people by rich philanthropists; and the working-class now go for their annual trip to the sea-side, and ride and drive on bicycles, brakes, and waggonettes—a thing almost unknown fifty years ago.

Their hours of labour, too, are much shorter than they

* Eden's "State of the Poor."

were. Early in the present century men, women, and children worked from twelve to sixteen hours a day. They now work ten. I see you state (p. 38), "*Nunquam*," in "*Merrie England*" that the workers are employed from fifty-three to seventy hours in the factory. Surely you are acquainted with the Factory Acts, which limit the hours to fifty-six. This is long enough in all conscience, without you trying to make it appear longer.

Not only then are we better off than we were in these above-mentioned ways, but *we are also much better off than our neighbours abroad*, where wages are from *one-third to one-half less than our own!* The Italian peasant with his 10d. a day; the Belgian miner with his 3s., and longer hours; the Indian cotton-spinner with his 1s. or so, are a fair indication of what foreign wages are like.

Of course, I know full well there is another and a darker side to the picture of progress I have here drawn, and that in spite of all these undoubted material improvements in our lives, there is still much misery and discontent about.

The increase of unemployed workmen, for instance, is one of the greatest sores in England at the present day; and for the last three years, during the depressed state of trade, this sore has been getting more painful, and more difficult to bear patiently.

Fifty years ago we had the manufacturing trade of the world almost in our own hands. We got the start of other nations, who bought their goods from us, and

kept our men *steadily* and *increasingly* employed. The opening out of the great railways, too, all over England at the same time enormously increased the opportunity for profitable investment of capital, and the consequent *demand for labour*. Now our railways are nearly all completed; and foreigners, instead of buying our goods, manufacture for themselves, and enter into *yearly increasing competition with us* in the neutral markets. Speculation and enterprise has become keener and more liable therefore to sudden shocks; and "gluts in the market," followed by "booms," alternate far more frequently than they did. Large numbers of men are from time to time (as during the last three years' depression) thrown out of work, and much misery exists.

But, in addition to the unhappiness this increase of unemployed brings amongst us, there is, I think, another cause which is equally influential in promoting it, and that is the "Gospel of Discontent," which the Socialist Labour party are so busy spreading amongst the people.

"Godliness with content is great gain," says the old book, but nowadays we are told by the new Labour Prophets that Discontent is "divine"—the only thing to make a man happy (strange paradox!), and that the Hebrew prophets were not at all "up to date" in praising Content.

Moreover, in order to make us get quite savage with our lot in life, Socialists paint it in the darkest of dark

colours, bringing out in strong relief all the shadows, and keeping in subjection, and as much as possible out of sight, all the corresponding lights. There is indeed in the Socialist's eye no silver lining to the social cloud of the present; the sky is one of uniform and impenetrable gloom!

And not only do they thus exaggerate all the evils of the present day, but in order to make us still more disgusted and impatient with our lot, they artfully compare it with the beautiful picture of the Socialistic Future, and excite within our hearts the most boundless and extravagant hopes of the "good time coming."

You, "Nunquam," in "Merrie England," and Mr. Bellamy in "Looking Backward," have given us to understand, that when Socialism is an accomplished fact, we shall all enjoy a kind of Paradise on earth.

The finest music, the most lovely women, the choicest champagnes, the most piquant late dinners will be every man's portion; and he will enjoy all these things in a climate and amidst surroundings which even Paris or the shores of the Mediterranean and the finest London mansions would not hold a candle to.*

What wonder then that some of the "young hopefuls" and weaker-minded amongst us should have their heads a bit turned, and lend perhaps a too willing ear to such subtle, seductive, and ridiculous promises. Mahomet gained his power and popularity, I believe, by promising his followers a Paradise in Heaven. Labour Leaders

* "Merrie England," p. 44.

nowadays promise a Paradise on earth. But in both cases the results are not unsimilar, and lead to miserable disgust for the present life, and fanatical faith in the future.

Whether or no Mahomet had less solid ground than our modern Socialists have for making such promises, it is not for me to decide; but one cannot help remembering an old proverb of Artemus Ward's, which applies equally, I think, in both cases: "Never prophesy unless you know." Prophecies and promises are very easily made, but not so easily performed. At least that is my experience.

But in addition to this discontent which Socialism is so busily fomenting, there is another cause of modern dissatisfaction which I would notice, and that is, the greater keenness and sensitiveness of our feelings and perceptions now, compared with past times. Whether it be brought on by a certain lack of that light-hearted, robust carelessness which enabled our forefathers to bear more than we can, I know not; but it is, I think, quite certain that we of the new generation are like good old Mrs. Gummidge, "We feels our troubles;" and now that we believe they are both remediable and of our own making, not God's, we cannot submit as patiently to them as of old. The national conscience has been, in fact, awakened; and we sympathise more than ever before with our poorer brethren in misfortune, and suffer from that sympathy. Though our condition is really more easy and comfortable than it used to be, it *seems* to

us worse ; *for material progress has not increased so fast as our wants and aspirations.*

This, I think, explains much of the discontent about. We are more keenly conscious of the laborious and monotonous lives of so many poor workmen ; and we cannot avoid seeing some apparent want of justice in their lives when we compare them with those of many rich people. It makes us angry.

And yet, whilst enumerating all these many causes of present-day discontent, I think we should not omit one which is perhaps the chief of all, and that is, constitutional discontent—some fault in our own nervous system which tends to make us whine and complain, and seek a remedy outside ourselves, instead of seeking it within.

A great German philosopher* once said that "The happiness we receive from ourselves is greater than that we obtain from our surroundings;" and it is only necessary to look at the merry play and jollity of many a poor bare-footed boy in the street to see the sound truth of the remark.

Many people seem to think more money would bring them more happiness ; but this is not by any means always the case. "A man's happiness consists not merely in the abundance of things he possesseth," but in quite other rather. And in nothing does it consist so much as in a man's possession of Religious Faith, Hope, and Principle, and that is what I fear too few workmen now possess.

* Schopenhauer.

As Thomas Carlyle says, "The Spiritualism of England has been utterly forgotten for two Godless centuries,"* and this is nowhere so sadly and strongly exemplified as in the loss of belief in a Heavenly Immortality, which is so painfully common nowadays.

"The loss of belief in a Future Life," says Gladstone, "is the saddest thing that can happen to a man;" and indeed, I think, it is one of the chief causes of all vice, misery, and recklessness.

Amidst the stormy passions of youth, the stern struggle of middle age, and the gloom of old age, it is of the greatest possible assistance to a man to put trust in God; to try to live a goodly, righteous, sober, and Christian life, and to look forward with calm faith to a *happier* future.

Yet how few there are even of those who profess and call themselves Christians who do this!

Here, then, is another source of unhappiness. And now, having thus compared Past with Present, and pointed out some causes of our present discontent, I will examine your next important statement.

* Carlyle's "Past and Present."

III.

OUR TRADE AND FOOD SUPPLY.

“A great country is like a tree, whose branches a wise gardener will prune as they require it, but which a reckless one will tear up by the roots.”

“I have never seen a husbandman like the British farmer.”—*Thorold Rogers.*

IN the beginning of “Merrie England,” you say, “Nunquam,” that there is a Problem to solve, which is as follows:—

“Given a Country and a People, find out how the People can make the best of the Country and of Themselves.”*

After indulging in much violent abuse of the Factory System, etc., and after showing the way in which our commercial and industrial system causes waste of labour, you tell us roughly on page 43 what system you would suggest as an improvement and alternative. “First of all,” you say, “I would set men to work to grow wheat and fruit, and rear cattle and poultry for our own use. . . Then I would restrict our mines, furnaces, chemical works, and factories to the number actually needed for the supply of our own people. . . .

* “Merrie England,” p. 37.

"In order to achieve these ends I would make all the land, mills, mines, factories, workshops, ships, and railways the property of the nation."*

Now this, you must admit, is a "rather large order"; but as it comprises the real backbone, so to speak, of the Socialist proposals, it deserves a searching examination, in order to see whether it is practical or not; whether it is founded on the solid bed-rock of common sense and reason, or whether it is as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal," based merely on words and empty wind.

As you seem to imply that we could with advantage do away with our foreign trade, and grow food and make everything for ourselves, let us first get some clear idea of what our foreign trade means.

Here are some figures which will explain. They are taken from the Official Blue Books, issued annually by the Board of Trade, and are the only reliable statistics we have on the subject. As they are, moreover, about the only figures I shall give throughout these pages, I hope they will not frighten you too much to read them.

In 1891 the *Imports* into the United Kingdom of Foreign and Colonial Merchandise was as follows:—

Food	...	...	...	£183,000,000
Raw materials	...	...	...	175,000,000
Manufactured goods	...	...	...	50,000,000
Various	...	...	...	27,000,000
Total...				£435,000,000

* "Merrie England," p. 43.

In 1891 the *Exports* of British and Irish Merchandise was :—

Food	...	...	...	£9,000,000
Raw materials	...	...	...	35,000,000
Manufactured goods	...	...	...	184,000,000
Various	...	...	...	19,000,000
				<hr/>
Total	...	...	...	£247,000,000

or, Total Imports and Exports, £682,000,000 (six hundred and eighty-two millions)!

As some few of the leading details of this enormous foreign trade of ours may be interesting, I here give the following, taken from the Blue Books of 1891:—

IMPORTS.

<i>Food.</i>	<i>Raw Materials.</i>
Wheat.....£30 millions.	Cotton.....£48 millions.
Corn..... 20 "	Wool..... 28 "
Flour..... 10 "	Wood..... 15 "
Butter..... 11 "	
Bacon & ham. 9½ "	
Eggs..... 3½ "	
Cheese... .. 4½ "	
Fruit..... 8 "	
Tea..... 10 "	
Sugar 20 "	
	<i>Manufactures.</i>
	Silk.....£10 millions.
	Woollen 9½ "
	Gloves..... 2 "

EXPORTS.

<i>Raw Materials.</i>		<i>Manufactures.</i>	
Coal.....	£20 millions.	Cotton.....	£71 millions.
Iron.....	2 ,,	Woollen.....	22 ,,
Wool.....	2 ,,	Machinery...	12 ,,
Various.....	6 ,,	Steam engines	4 ,,

From the above figures it will be seen that food and raw materials for our workmen to exercise their labour upon, are the chief imports; that we have few raw materials beyond *coal* to export, and no food worth mentioning; and that our exports are almost entirely manufactured goods, in the form of cotton, woollens, machinery, hardware, etc.

Now, with such a huge foreign trade as this, giving employment to millions of our workpeople, does it not sound, good "Nunquam," something rather like nonsense to say, as you do (p. 12), that "we should make the best of our own country before attempting to trade with other peoples!"

If England were a young and new country like Australia, your remark might perhaps hold good; but when applied to our old country, which has been developing and laboriously building up her foreign trade so enormously during the past century, it is surely nothing less than silly.

It is all very well for Socialists to rage furiously together about the dirt, ugliness, etc., of the Factory System; but when they begin to denounce it as "a

hideous, false, and futile thing,"* they only make themselves ridiculous; for, whatever we may think about it, the Factory System is here in our midst, confronting us as an extremely solid fact, which is not going to take itself off in a hurry merely for a bit of abuse.

Our Foreign Trade is indeed a gigantic and a stern reality, and one too of almost marvellous growth and expansion; increasing at an incredible speed—from about £70,000,000 in 1820 to £680,000,000 in 1890.

Moreover, not only has it thus multiplied itself in size and extent no less than ten times in the last seventy years, but it has at the same time given employment to an ever-increasing number of our workpeople. Millions of them, in fact, *depend on our Foreign Trade for their weekly wage and daily bread*; and anything that tends to interfere therewith, tends at the same time to throw our people out of employment. For it is only by the export of our manufactured goods that we can pay for our enormous food supply imported from abroad, Trade being still carried on really by an unseen and intricate system of barter.

If then you were to do as you propose, and "limit our mills, workshops, etc., to the number required to supply our own needs," the consequence would immediately be, that a vast number of mills, etc., now employed in making goods for the foreign and colonial market would be closed, their value would shrink to nothing, and the people now employed in them would

* "Merrie England," p. 21.

be thrown out of work. And not only this, but America, Australia, and foreign countries, no longer being able to import our manufactured goods, would consequently no longer be able to supply us with food, and we should therefore either have to grow it ourselves or starve!

And now we come to the vital point of your argument, which is, that "we might grow our own food in England every bit as cheap as they grow it abroad."

One's first and most natural comment on this assertion would be that—pigs might fly! Also, one would feel inclined to ask if we could grow corn cheaper than America or India, why don't you, "Nunquam," show us how it may be done? Socialists are always *theorising* about the land and abusing the British farmer; but I have yet to learn that any Socialist has succeeded in practically carrying out his theories with success.

Professor Thorald Rogers says he "has never met so good a husbandman as the English farmer;" and it is a well-known fact that *we in England now raise nearly twice as much to the acre as they do in France and other countries.*

As you seem, however, to be so "cock-sure" that we could grow three-fold, and even *ten-fold* * more corn than our present population needs, I will examine your authority and foundations for this surprising statement, and let Dead-heads here pull themselves together, for the argument is intricate.

First then—your authorities (who, be it observed, all

* "Merrie England," pp. 29, 30.

differ by a trifling hundred millions or so) as to the population we might support. These are as follows:—Lauderdale, Allison, Cobden, Mechi, and Prince Krapotkin.

Now Lauderdale and Allison I know not; the other three I do know; and I am quite ready to agree with them that by what is called “intensive cultivation,” we might possibly be able to feed ourselves with home-grown produce.

What I am not ready to admit, and what, I notice, none of your authorities save Krapotkin admit, is, that we could grow our food as *cheap* as we get it from abroad. “Intensive cultivation” means in fact *dear* cultivation. Both Cobden and Mechi, it is true, raised by their experimental system of “high farming” very much larger crops than the average; but they did it at a dead loss to themselves. It is a well-known fact, that they were out of pocket very considerably by the process; and indeed, both one and the other, from being rich men at one time became, before they died, very poor, if not actually bankrupt.

The truth is, that a well-known economic law here comes in, and will not be ignored, even though you Socialists try to forget it. And this is the law of what is called “Diminishing Returns,” which means that when land has been cultivated to a certain pitch, it then begins to require a greater and increasing application of labour and manure, in order to produce more than it did before; in other words, after a certain point, land

doesn't repay the farmer for putting more manure and labour on it.

And so instead of being able to grow "enough for all our population with one quarter the labour now spent in getting improper sustenance,"* we should, on the contrary, have to increase our labour to a very large degree. And we are indeed in England, now at this very moment, experiencing most forcibly and painfully the truth of this same law of "diminishing returns."

America with her boundless extent of fresh reclaimed land can grow corn without expending so much labour and manure upon it as we are obliged to expend on our older and more cultivated soil, and therefore America grows corn cheaper than we can grow it. Hence our agriculture is *not*, as you say, "Nunquam," "being killed by the Tory Land-grabber and the Liberal money-grubber,"† but *simply and solely by foreign competition, and our Free Trade principles.*

Do away with these principles and return to Protection, and you can certainly raise more corn in England, and employ more men on the land in raising it; but in doing so, you will most assuredly raise the price of bread at the same time. Are you prepared to do this?

It is all very well to say that "England grew enough wheat in 1841 to feed her twenty-four millions of people;" but why do you omit to state that *wheat was at that time 60s. per quarter, or three times its present price*, and

* "Merrie England," p. 17.

Ibid., p. 36.

that the population is now thirty-eight millions, or nearly two-thirds larger than it was then?

In 1854 our growth of wheat was 140 million bushels; in 1894, 61 million bushels; showing, singularly enough, that forty years ago we grew double as much wheat as we grow now with a much larger population.

And yet, "given a thorough knowledge of agricultural chemistry," you say, "and there is no doubt that we might produce more food with less labour." Certainly—and pigs might fly! At present, as practical men, we must e'en do our best with such knowledge of chemistry as we possess.

Socialists often *talk* about reclaiming the land, and are very fond of abusing the poor farmer; but let them try and reclaim a bit of land themselves; I warrant they will soon give up the experiment. Again and again, large landowners, like the late Duke of Sutherland, have tried and failed. The truth of the matter is—people do not reclaim land, simply because it does not pay them to do so. They can employ labour more profitably, that is, more productively, in other enterprises.

When, therefore, you say we can grow enough food for our people at home, with less labour and at a less price than we do now, you are obviously talking at random, not practically or accurately. In short, as the song says, "You don't know where you are." But when you go on to quote that eccentric Russian exile, nobleman, and anarchist, Prince Krapotkin, and calmly give us to understand you really think

it practicable to raise enough food in one English county to supply the whole population of the United Kingdom,* you will pardon me, "Nunquam," if I tell you plainly you are talking "rot"!

And when, finally, you wind up by gravely informing us that "Questions of manufacture and agriculture are only partly understood, *because it is the rich and not the clever who consider them,*" you really become quite funny.

Your remarks are "rich," certainly—but not the poor farmers. *They* are on the high road to bankruptcy!

Really, after such a couple of statements as these last, one is tempted to think you indeed must be what you with characteristic modesty say you are—"a very ignorant man."† I will, however, not decide this point at present.

But whilst thus showing you where you are in error about our food supply, I am quite of your opinion as to the danger we run, in case of war, of depending so largely upon foreign countries for food; and also as to the unnatural and melancholy ruin of our agriculture, and the immigration of our farm labourers into the towns. Were we to become involved in a European war, it is quite possible that we might have our food supply cut off, and be thereby starved into submission. In such case our boasted Free Trade principles would be found somewhat dear, I fancy.

The most melancholy consequence of our so-called Free Trade, however, is shown in the depopulation of

* "Merrie England," p. 30. † "Merrie England," p. 50.

Our Trade and Food Supply.

our villages and the numbers of farm labourers who have gone into the towns, there to swell the ranks of the unemployed. But this, though so conspicuous a feature of these last few years, is no new one, as many people seem to think. The same unhappy immigration into the towns and decay of the villages was lamented by Oliver Goldsmith, the poet, a hundred years and more ago, when the new inventions of machinery first began to raise the wages of town labour, and so attract the poorer paid labour from the fields.

“ Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
When wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.”

The above lines, taken from that beautiful poem, “The Deserted Village,” shows that the immigration of farm labour into the towns has been going on for a century and more.

To point out the cause, however, without suggesting the remedy for the disease, would be futile. I will therefore boldly assert that there is but one cure, and one cure only, for this agricultural ruin that has come on us, and that is a return to a modified form of Protection. What that form of Protection would be I will point out in another chapter.

A Reply to "Merrie England."

IV.

THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY.

"Nationalisation of the Land would only add about twopence per day to every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom."
—*Mallock*.

"The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one ought to be deprived of it except in cases of evident public necessity, legally ascertained, and on condition of a previous just indemnity."—" *Rights of Man*."

PASSING by the many minor misstatements and exaggerations with which you begin Chapter VII. of "Merrie England," I now come to one of the two grand central dogmas or assertions upon which Socialists found all their extravagant demands.

This is the statement, first originated by Proudhon, and subsequently formulated by Marx, that

THE WORKERS EARN *ALL* THE WEALTH.

By workers is here meant, of course, manual workmen.

Now this is a very serious and important assertion to make. If Socialists could prove it to be true, they

would have reason for making their subsequent demands. It will not, however, be very difficult, I think, to disprove this absurd dogma and assumption. For it would be just about as true to say that the captain and officers of a ship did nothing and the seamen did everything in sailing a ship, as to say the working men do everything and the employer and his principals nothing in producing manufactured goods.

The statement is obviously untrue on the very face of it. *It is in fact a Lie!* Moreover, it shows to what a pitch of darkness this dogma has led Socialists and their followers blindfold. For in ignoring and depreciating *mind*—the organising and inventive mind—as an element in the work of production, it puts mere muscle before mind, and so leads to a brutal kind of materialism and a spirit of irreverence for the best (or mental) qualities of our nature, which would be most destructive to human progress. Karl Marx truly was not very flattering to the intelligence of his readers, when he enunciated this preposterous piece of nonsense in his ponderous work on “Capital.” And yet it appears there are people still silly and unthinking enough to believe it!

The truth of the matter is, that not only are the employers or “Captains of Industry,” as Carlyle calls them, just as necessary as the captains of a ship, or the colonels of a regiment; but that without their enterprise, energy, talents, and inventiveness, the workers would not be nearly so well off as they are now. For

it is chiefly by the great *labour-saving inventions which capital has applied to labour*, and by the employers' powers of organisation, etc., that the prices of necessities have been reduced, and the wages of labour raised. A well-known writer* indeed shows with almost convincing force of argument, that the "Capitalists or men of ability have taken from the Labourers only what they themselves have added to their labour by their ability; and that what is called Industrial Progress is the work of a small minority of society."

Of course this is an extreme capitalist view of the question; but it is certainly not more extreme than to assert that labourers make all the wealth, and capitalists nothing, as Socialists do. In constructing a railroad, for instance, the navvy's labour only affects the millionth part of the undertaking; that of the engineer the whole. And yet Socialists say that the manual worker earns *all* the wealth!

Again, Carlyle, whom you call one of our greatest thinkers, tells us that "Whatsoever the general mass of men continue to do or to attain, all things that we see standing accomplished in the world, are properly the outward material result and practical realisation of thoughts that dwelt in the great men sent into the world."

And Kempner in other words confirms this:—"Material progress," he says, "means improvement in

* Mallock, in "Labour and the Popular Welfare."

the instruments of labour. The new possibilities of commerce are not due so much to the personal qualities of the worker, as to the perfected and multiplied tools which capital puts at his disposal. That capital is doing wonders, that it enables us to do many important things not dreamed of in old times, is evident. Clearly then capital deserves an extra reward, and obtains it." *

I think the above illustrations will be found quite sufficient to clearly prove the complete falsity of Karl Marx's dogma, that manual labour makes all the wealth. They, at any rate, certainly show that the capitalist is not such an unnecessary curse as he is represented to be.

Not only then is the master-mind of the capitalist or employer a most important ingredient in all productive enterprise; but his money, or capital, is equally so.

You, "Nunquam," assert that the worker, as you call him, "makes all the wealth"; but what would the worker be able to accomplish without the machinery, I should like to know!

Karl Marx tried to explain this away, but he signally failed in doing so.

"Capital," says Professor Marshall,† "is the result of Labour and Abstinence;" and when a man saves up a bit of money and buys a machine, both he himself and his machine are thereby increasing the productive power

* Kempner's "Common-Sense Socialism."

† Marshall's "Economics of Industry."

of the country, and the power for good of the man he employs to work it. And yet capitalists are called a curse, "an unnecessary curse," by these far-seeing Socialists! Professor Marshall, on the other hand, would seem to prove that, instead of being a curse, the capitalist is a blessing!

But, whatever may be his value and position in the industrial world, I think I have shown here quite clearly that the workers do *not* earn all the wealth; and that "to designate, as does Marx, the whole profit of capital plunder, is in itself a plundering outbreak of hypercritical logic."* It is, in fact, absolutely false.

And when you bring forward your estimates of the money respectively earned by capital and labour, you are again singularly inaccurate and uncertain. You say that Capital takes £800,000,000, and Labour only £500,000,000 of the national income or earnings; and yet on another page (57) you seem to change your mind and make Labour take nearly half (or £600,000,000) of the total annual income.

Whichever of the two estimates is right, you are at any rate certainly not justified in subsequently asserting, as you do all through your book, that the workers only get a third of their earnings.

Immediately following this confused and inaccurate estimate of the relative division of our national earnings, comes your next bold and sweeping assertion that

* Schoeffle's "Impossibility of Socialism."

THE RICH HAVE NO RIGHT TO
THEIR WEALTH.

As this is a Socialist dogma quite equal in importance to the one already discussed, namely, that "manual workers earn all the wealth;" and *as it is one of the two great central assertions* upon the truth of which depend alike the justice and reasonableness of all Socialist demands, I must here again ask the reader to give his close and patient attention to the following argument, as it is somewhat intricate. I think I shall be clearly able to prove that, though the rich have not in all cases *full* right to their wealth, they undoubtedly have *some* right to it, a point, it seems to me, of most vital significance, and one also which is too often lost sight of.

In the first place then, let us take the case of the Land, and see whether "the original title to all land possessed by private owners is that of fraud, force, or theft,"* as you, "Nunquam," assert. And let us begin with Canada, for instance, whither so many of our people are emigrating nowadays, and let us examine the title to the land there.

Well, Canada has certainly been originally partly bought and partly conquered from the native Red Indian tribes by the earlier English emigrants; but we should remember that, though not perhaps entirely obtained by rules of strict justice, Canada has become in the hands of the English what she never could have become in the hands of the poor, ignorant, sparsely-scattered wild Indians

* "Merrie England," p. 58.

—a rich and most promising country. She has in fact been won from barbarism, for the uses of civilisation. The inferior races have had to give way to the superior, as is nature's law; the fittest have survived. And so, bit by bit, Canada has gradually, during the last hundred years or so, become allotted and portioned out to different English emigrants, until a large part of it is now occupied and brought under cultivation. Still there yet exist large tracts of forest-land, which belong to either the Government of Canada, the Railway companies, or private owners; and these tracts are in the continual process of being reclaimed by the squatter or emigrant who buys his claim.

Now the process is much as follows. The thrifty English farm-labourer, having saved a bit of money, lands in Canada; goes to the office of, say, the Canadian Pacific Railway; buys a claim from them, say, of 120 acres of land, at the mere nominal sum of half-a-crown or five shillings an acre; buys some farming implements, and sets vigorously to work to reclaim and cultivate the soil he has squatted upon and paid for. Now I should like to know, friend "Nunquam," where the "force or fraud" comes in here?

Again, let us take the case of England. At the Norman Conquest, some 800 years ago, the land of Great Britain, which was then, for the most part, little more cultivated than the forests of Canada are now, was allotted in large counties to different counts and barons; and by them it was again subdivided amongst their

followers, who "squatted" on the land, much as our emigrants do now in Canada; the only difference being that instead of buying the land right off, like the Canadian emigrant, the Norman emigrant paid a certain amount of rent in kind to the count or landlord; and both count and tenant bound themselves to perform certain reciprocal services.

Where again, I would ask, does the "fraud, violence, or theft" come in here? You, "Nunquam," will say, no doubt, in the conquest of England by the Normans.

But is this conquest any more "force, fraud, or theft" than the conquest of America by the early English settlers?

I think not. Besides, it occurred 800 years ago, long before our conquest of Canada or America from the Redskins; and therefore the prescriptive right of English landowners to their land is longer and therefore stronger than that of the Canadian squatter. And yet if in Canada a stranger were to come around in the course of a few years, when that squatter had by hard work and constant care reclaimed and cultivated his holding, and demand coolly that the squatter should divide it with him, would you call *that* justice? I think not.

And yet this is what Socialists seem to think fair!

Ah! "Nunquam," "Nunquam," can't you see that you are purposing to commit the very self-same injustice you denounce others in the same breath for committing. I have heard of Satan condemning sin, but never before have I seen it so well exemplified.

Again, you say "a man has no right to anything he has not produced by his own unaided efforts;" but has a man no right, then, to gifts or legacies? Has the architect, then, no right to receive pay, because he has been aided in the work of building the church by the Irish hodman? Perhaps you will explain?

Again, you say that the landlords have "stolen the common lands."

I will give you an example of the way in which they "stole" it! In Yorkshire, about fifty years ago, there were in a certain district about 400 acres of brushwood, heather, whin, and swamp. Anybody might turn his cow into it; but nobody did. A cow must eat. *The land was worthless.* But the lord of the manor spent ten thousand pounds on it. Without a capitalist it would have remained a waste to the end of time. It is now a flourishing farm, employing many labourers, earning good wages. In fact, the landlord increased the riches, prosperity, and population of the country.

Such is one of the ordinary ways in which the wicked landlord has "stolen the commons!" "In England," said Jeremy Bentham, the famous Radical, "the greatest improvement is the enclosure of commons. When we pass over the lands which have undergone this happy change, we are enchanted as with the appearance of a new colony. Harvests, flocks, and smiling habitations have now succeeded to the sadness and sterility of the desert!"

So much for this much-abused "enclosure of commons."

Again, in another part of this famous Chapter VII., I see you draw a sketch of the origin of some of our English nobility; and a very dark one it is. But is it not a little strange that you have carefully selected your examples from the reign of Charles the Second, the very worst period of English history!

Is this quite fair, "Nunquam"? Is this a specimen of that "terrible, implacable, Socialist justice" you talk so much about? It seems to me one might, with about equal justice, select a few of the worst sample prisoners from a police-court, and try to pass them off as very fair representatives of the working classes. Your presentment, then, of our nobility is palpably libellous; it is a mere caricature.

Again, when you assert that the land ought to be restored to the people, you had better first prove that it ever belonged to them! It certainly never belonged to the masses of the people alive to-day; and it most assuredly never belonged equally to the masses in days gone by. The theory that all natural media belong equally to all men is not supported by a particle of evidence.

What we have abundant evidence of is that, in nearly all the countries of the world, Priority of Claim is the one great basis of property.

Where land is plentiful and unreclaimed, the individual who first discovers and reclaims it interferes with no one's rights. Should his neighbours increase and multiply and demand a share, they may have the *might*, but

they have not the *right* to do so. For, as John Stuart Mill justly observes, "No man has a right to bring creatures into life to be supported by others."*

From all the above illustrations it must become abundantly evident to every fair-minded man that the present owners of land have a very well-founded claim to their property; for the man who first reclaims and cultivates the soil really *makes* it, so to speak—that is to say, he alone renders it productive, turning what was once a barren wilderness into a smiling garden. And not only has he a right to this property, but he has a right to give, sell, or bequeath it as he may think fit. It is his own creation, and therefore we must conclude that those who have either bought or inherited property have just as good a right to it as the first owner had.

In all considerations upon the subject of land we should always bear in mind the fact that "the soil is, once for all, not the gift of nature to the nation; but a means of production slowly manufactured by the arts and labours of numberless generations of proprietors and tenants."†

Moreover, we should equally remember that a very large amount of our land in England has changed hands during the present century. Great estates have been cut up and sold; and instead of the land being owned, as you assert, "Nunquam," by some 30,000 landlords,

* J. S. Mill, "Principles of Political Economy."

† Schoeffle's "Impossibility of Socialism."

there are, on the contrary, some million or so of proprietors, large and small, who have purchased it on their good faith in the Government's power to guarantee their full possession. To confiscate—or, in the jargon of the day, to nationalise—the few acres of land, or the ground rent that a man had invested his hard-earned savings in, would clearly be a monstrous act of injustice.

But whilst thus proving the right of landlords to their land, I cannot ignore the fact, that there is a wide-spread feeling abroad, that the larger ones have got more than their share, and this feeling appears to me justifiable.

Where, then, the owner of a large estate is clearly proved to be squandering his money in riot, gaming, or debauchery; or where he is an incorrigible absentee, spending the rents he draws from his land in foreign parts, in such a case I think it would be fair to lay an extra tax on him, or buy him out with fair if not full compensation. A graduated income tax also might be fairly levied on all the larger landlords.

In some such way as this the more glaring inequalities of wealth might in time disappear, and the men who now provoke envy and hatred amongst the poor by their superfluously large fortunes, might gradually become extinct.

But any such bold sweeping measure of expropriation as some of the Socialists propose, would be, as I have plainly shown, a gigantic act of national dishonesty, which would bring on us due retribution; which would

weigh on our conscience, and which we English people would never be shameless enough to consent to.

And now, having shown that manual labour does *not* earn all the wealth of the country, and that the rich have *some* right to their wealth, if not a right to all of it, I will examine your next assertion.

V.

RENT AND INTEREST.

“Rent is the money paid for the hire of land.”—*Duke of Argyll.*

“Profits of Capital are the seedcorn of the field of Production.”—*Anon.*

“All Capital is primarily an advance on account of wages.”—*Levy.*

AND now let us see, “Nunquam,” what your ideas are about Rent.

Rent is generally understood to be the money paid for the hire of land.

You say, however, that Rent is Robbery.

This statement is neither new nor true. Proudhon, a great French Socialist, made the same statement more than forty years ago.* Henry George repeated it again and again in his book, “Progress and Poverty,” brought out in 1881.

The assertion, you then perceive, has lost the charm of novelty; it is getting a trifle stale. But since you seem to think you can prove the truth of what you say, let us examine it a moment carefully.

* Proudhon, “Propriété c’est le vol.”

And first let us take the case of the obscure Anglo-Spanish hybrid nobleman, whom you bring forward to illustrate and explain the meaning of *English Landlordism*.

"*The Duke of Plazo Toro*," you say, "owns an estate. The rent roll is £30,000 a year. Where does the money come from?"

"The estate is let out to farmers at so much an acre. These farmers pay the Duke this £30,000 a year. Where do the farmers get it from?"

"The farmers sell their crops, and out of the purchase-money pay the rent. How are crops raised?"

"The crops are raised by the agricultural labourers under the direction of the farmers.

"That is to say, that the rent is earned by labour—by the labour of the farmer and his men. The Duke does nothing. The Duke did not make the land, neither did he raise the crops. He has therefore no right to take the rent."

Now, I have got no special brief to defend Dukes in particular, and I think some of them are not the most useful men in the world; but even for Dukes and their existence I think there is something to be said.

As the poor, despised nobleman sings in one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas—

"Hearts just as brave and fair
May dwell in Belgrave Square,
As in Seven Dials."

I admire your cunning in the art of special pleadship, "Nunquam," in trying to pass off a duke on your readers as a fair average specimen of a landlord; but the question arises, are you quite fair yourself in doing so?

Dukes are not quite as plentiful as blackberries; the number of these rare and lofty potentates is, I believe, in all England, twenty-two only. You see, then, in the very first place, Dukes are quite extreme and rare cases, and do not at all fairly represent the case of the average landlord.

Then, again, I notice that in your description of the way rent is obtained, you entirely omit the controlling and superintending services of both the estate agent, his staff, and the Duke himself.

You evidently appear to think *they* are smoking pipes all day, with their hands in their pockets!

But those who have any acquaintance with estate officers and Dukes know that both are for the most part very busily occupied superintending the general management; and that, like adjutant and colonel of a regiment, the land agent and his master have very necessary and leading services to fulfil.

A few, no doubt, a very small minority, may leave nearly all the work to their agents, but they do so at very great peril of losing their money.

As Mr. Gladstone says, "There may be many bad landlords, and many middling ones; yet, thank God, there are also many good landlords."*

* Hawarden speech, Sept. 23, 1889.

But in addition to looking after their estates, our nobility undertake most of the leading official duties of county government. As chairman of Quarter Sessions, of County Councils, of County Hospitals, Asylums, Agricultural Societies, etc., they for the most part render most important and useful services. They are indeed, as a rule, far from being the idle, useless drones you, "Nunquam," try to represent. Indeed, Robert Browning, the poet, a man of most liberal and advanced views, said our English country gentlemen were "the salt of the earth." Browning had lived much abroad, and had seen there the evils which came from the lack in country places of those little centres of civilisation—the homes of country gentlemen.

In France, where such houses are few and far between, Lady Verney and other writers tell us—"Women are treated as beasts of burden; the cottages are filthy. The home of an English labourer is a paradise in comparison."

As a county administrator and general superintendent of his estate, the "Country Gentleman," then, is of no little service to the country, and his home is a centre of civilisation and an example of manners and right living to the neighbourhood.

With regard to his not having made the land, and, therefore, having no right to the rent, or share in the produce of the land, I think I have shown sufficiently clearly in the last chapter that he most assuredly has a very considerable right to it, if not actually a full and

absolute one; and that if he himself has not made the land, his forefathers have certainly by their wise and enlightened spirit of enterprise taken a leading part in making it. Even Professor Thorold Rogers, a great Radical, acknowledges this, when he says—"The rise of rent from 7s. to 10s. in the last century was the work of the landowners, and was entirely deserved. They did the highest public service. Least of all would I complain that their gains were large."*

But when coming down from Dukes, Earls, and large country squires, we look at the infinitely more numerous small landowners, *their* right to the land they have bought or inherited becomes more and more absolute, as I have clearly shown in the last chapter.

We may then say, I think, that landowners have a very considerable right to their property, if not all; and that they are by no means so black, "Nunquam," as you have tried to paint them.

And that which we say about the rent of land we may say equally, I think, about *House Rent*.

"*Mr. Bounderby*," you say, "owns a row of houses; but as he never built the houses himself, nor earned the money with which he bought them, therefore *Mr. Bounderby* has neither right to the houses, nor to the rent he draws from them."

But suppose we substitute for the opprobrious name of *Bounderby* that of *Henry Irving*; and let us see how the case stands then.

* Rogers, "Economic Interpretation of History."

According to general report, Henry Irving, the actor, has made a large sum of money by his acting. If ever wealth was honestly obtained, this has been. He got it by the exercise of his talent in the open market, where people were free either to pay or go without. Some of this money he invests in house property. Yet, you say he has no right to it!

Further comment is, I think, superfluous.

Again, from the case of Mr. Bounderby you bring us to that of the *Earl of Chowbent* (good title that!), and to the subject of

INTEREST AND PROFIT;

and in doing so, I see you bring in again that old "bogey" of yours—the Duke of Plazo Toro. But let us take Chowbent for a change; and let us follow his unholy career in the path of greed and avarice. He and six others worse than himself, it appears, put their heads and their money together, and enter upon the dark conspiracy of constructing a canal, which will benefit the neighbourhood and stimulate the employment of the people.

They set about their undertaking by forming a company, engaging an engineer, and hiring a small army of navvies, and the end of this deplorably melancholy enterprise is, according to you, that the engineer and navvies do all the work, and the company take all the profits!

But tell me, good "Nunquam," how much profit the Panama Canal is taking, or even the Manchester Ship

Canal so far? How much, too, are the Oldham Co-operative Spinning Mills taking in profit?

You seem to believe in three distinct consecutive absurdities here.

First, that manual labour does all the work, and superintendence, and capital nothing—a fallacy I have already exposed.

Secondly, that public companies are composed, as a rule, of about seven rich shareholders only, instead of being generally made up, as they are, of many hundred comparatively poor ones!

And lastly, *that all companies or industrial undertakings must of necessity turn out profitable!*

This latter assumption of yours is entirely unfounded.

As Marshall very aptly observes: “When an employer fails, his losses are soon forgotten by others; but success, as long as it lasts, forces itself on every one’s attention. And it is not to be wondered at, that, in trades in which success is unevenly distributed, some working men should forget the failures which have kept down the average rate of profits, whilst they look greedily at the few large fortunes that have been amassed, as it were, out of their toil.” *

To exemplify this, I may say that the Official Report on Limited Companies for 1892 states, that out of 2,371 new companies formed during that year, 1,091 went into liquidation!

You, “Nunquam,” forget this side of the question

* Marshall, “Economics of Industry,” p. 205.

apparently. Memories are sometimes conveniently dull. But this side should not be forgotten by any one who wishes to present a *fair* picture of industrial enterprises. The risk that is run by all capitalists in their undertakings should not be forgotten; nor should the small number of those who succeed, compared with the large number who fail, be forgotten also. Where risk is run, therefore, it is only right that remuneration in the shape of interest or profit should be proportionately high.

As to the dictum or dogma you wind up with—namely, that "nearly all the boasted 'capital' or wealth of the rich is produced annually," allow me to inform you, my poor friend, that this is another of those instances of naked nonsense with which your book is so replete.

Since official statistics inform us that the total wealth of the country is estimated at £4,500,000,000 or more, and the income at £1,350,000,000 only, perhaps you will explain how you arrive at the singular conclusion, that the wealth of the country is produced annually.

Having thus shown the "other side" of the question of Rent and Interest, I will turn to your next assertion.

VI.

MIDDLEMEN AND INVENTORS.

“The mind which conceives the design of serviceable work for other men, be it large or small—large as the Forth Bridge, or small as the poorest shop in a village—is the spring of all enterprise, and so of all employment.”—*Argyll*.

ON page 73 of “Merrie England” I find the following words written:—

“All employers of labour, all rich men, except the money-lenders and the landlords, are middlemen.

“They are all useless encumbrances, getting rich upon the labour of others.”

At first sight, on reading the above passage, a plain, practical man might be simply staggered by the combined audacity and absurdity of it. But by this time we are getting used to “Nunquam’s” assertions, and, however bold and uncompromising they may be, we can now receive them calmly, more in sorrow than in anger.

“All employers of labour and all middlemen are useless encumbrances,” you say.

Then it follows, of course, that all merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, farmers, co-operative store companies, etc., are all useless, and their labour in vain! All the great pioneers of British Trade, all the captains of industry, all the men who have led industrial enterprise and *found employment* for our ever-increasing population,—all these men are, in "Nunquam's" opinion, "useless encumbrances"!

And not only is the "captain of industry," it appears, "worse than useless," but the shopkeeper round the corner, he too is in like manner cumbering the ground; whilst the merchant or wholesale distributor is, I suppose, the most worthless and unnecessary of all the barren crew!

Of course, "Nunquam," you *may* be serious in all this. It is possible; but you must allow it is difficult to believe you can be. For the only conclusion we can come to on examining your assertion is, that the only labour of any real value is that of manual labour applied to production; and that labour when applied to distribution is of "no possible probable manner of use, no possible use whatever!"

But how on earth then are you going to carry on distribution, I would ask, in the future Socialist state?

If not shops, you will certainly have to provide Stores of some sort; and what is more, you will have to secure the services of capable and trustworthy men to direct and manage them, as well as a large staff of attendants to give out the various articles needed to the consumers.

But, according to you, these head officials and their staff are "useless encumbrances."

Then again, in the Socialist future, people would, I suppose, like to use cotton and silk and fine wool as they do now; and also tea and coffee, and tropical fruit of all kinds. You would therefore have to employ a large staff of paid State officials to take the place of the merchant and shipowner, whom you would do away with. But then you say merchants and middlemen are useless—"worse than useless;" then certainly these State officials must be useless too.

It is needless to examine your argument further, "Nunquam." It is on the very face of it absurd!

Middlemen of all kinds, whether merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, farmers, etc., *are* of course unquestionably of the greatest possible use to mankind; they are just as necessary in production and distribution as the manual workers, every bit; and no one except a Socialist fanatic would for a moment dispute the point.

But it is not alone the luckless middleman that Socialist unreason and fanaticism is busily bent on misrepresenting and vilifying.

The unhappy inventor also comes in for his share of depreciation. The inventor, we are told, owes his invention more to others than himself! and because he cannot make the iron or machines with his own hands, and because he cannot personally conduct the selling or working of them, therefore, forsooth, he is "taking a selfish advantage of his good fortune, and of the

necessity of his fellow-creatures," when he makes any profit by his invention !

Did one ever hear the like ! Surely, if a man, by his inventive talent and genius, discovers some means by which the world receives benefit, he has a right to offer his invention for sale in the open market, and receive what people will give him for it. They can take it or leave it, just as they please. Some people, hearing of the sums paid for, and the large fortunes made by inventions, think every invention, like every industrial enterprise of course, must be a success. They here again forget the failures. For every invention that succeeds, it is not too much to say, a hundred fail.

It is therefore right that those who run so many chances of spending both time and money without result, should, when successful, be well paid. If the prizes which successful inventors strive after were to be taken away, one should soon say good-bye to invention, I fancy.

As to all that you say, "Nunquam," about man having no personal independence, I will discuss this question with you in its proper time and place—namely, in the short chapter towards the end of this book, on "Environment." Whatever environment may do in influencing other people's character, it would not seem to have had the happiest effect in influencing yours; for on one page (52) I see you inform us that your mother taught you to read, and encouraged you to love literature; on another page you flatly contradict yourself by

gravely assuring us that you "don't know who it was who suckled, nursed, and *taught you*," thereby owning you don't know who your own mother was!

When therefore you ask where you got your ideas from, one would feel inclined to answer—where indeed?

When you subsequently ask what you owe to your schoolmaster, one would think, surely not very much! The man who doesn't know who his own mother was, it is difficult to take seriously.

VII.

COMPETITION AND THE LIVING WAGE.

"Competition, we have now learned, is neither good nor evil in itself; it is a force which has to be studied and controlled."—*Toynbee.*

"One of the greatest errors of the Socialists is to charge competition with all the economical evils that at present exist. They forget that wherever competition is not, monopoly is."—*J. S. Mill.*

"Competition is the natural fighting power in human nature."—*Anonymous.*

YOUR views on Competition are, like your views on everything else, "Nunquam," nothing if not bold. They are also nothing if not misleading. For instance, you say early in your book (p. 20) that—

"Competition is wasteful, cruel, and wrong;" and later on (p. 79), in the chapter you write upon this subject, you say that "In this country industrious men are generally poor, and rich men chiefly idle; the best and most useful men are not the best paid or rewarded; laziness and greed reap honour and wealth; whilst poverty and contumely are the lot of diligence and zeal; and the causes of all this," you say, "are competition and

privilege." You further state, that "it is not to the interest of the workers that commodities should be cheap."

Now, in the first place, Competition is only "wasteful, cruel, and wrong" when carried to excess and uncontrolled; and it is just as silly to condemn Competition wholesale, as it would be to condemn, say, Love or Religion because *they* were sometimes carried to excess. As a great writer* says, "Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl-chain of all the virtues."

But you, "Nunquam," seem to have neither temperance nor moderation of thought or language about you. If you would do away with all competition whatever, you must first do away with human nature itself, for which competition in one form or another affords one of the very salts of life. You must do away with cricket and football, in fact with all games and sports in which rivalry and emulation—in a word, competition—is the main-spring and central motive. Billiards, racing, rowing, etc., all would have to be barred from the Socialist State, if competition were to be forbidden, for they are one and all founded upon it. Competition is indeed nothing less than the natural fighting power in human nature, without which life would at once become impossibly flat, dull, and tame. It is, moreover, the main-spring by which we English as a nation have won for ourselves the foremost position in Europe we have undoubtedly so long possessed. Where should we have been, I

* Fuller.

wonder, had we, like China, refused to do a foreign trade with other nations, and so lost the healthy and bracing influence on our national life of foreign competition? Why, we should very likely have been in much the same backward state of civilisation as China is now. In spite of the evils, then, which competition brings along with it—and I frankly admit the evils—we see plainly that competition is a most wholesome and necessary ingredient, not only in the life of the units, but in the life of nations; and therefore to abuse competition as "cruel, wasteful, and wrong" is not only futile but foolish.

Again, to say that it is the chief cause of the best and most useful men not being the best paid and rewarded is, if possible, even more foolish still. It is indeed nothing less than rank nonsense. Pray, are not the best, the most useful, and most industrious men generally raised from the ranks of the workers, in all branches of industry, to a more honourable and lucrative position? Are not most of our station-masters on the railway, for instance, promoted from subordinate positions? Have not the foremen, managers, etc., of industrial concerns generally been at some previous time amongst the lower ranks of workmen?

And yet you say, "Nunquam," that "the most useful men are not the best paid!"

You certainly say some funny things in "Merrie England," but this, I think, almost "takes the cake" for concentrated absurdity.

Competition and the Living Wage. 65

In the same breath almost you go on to dub the men who write in the newspaper press as "stupid and dishonest"; but what about glass houses? Were *you* never stupid, my friend? Did *you* never write for the press?

Soft you, good "Nunquam," soft you a bit now. Before beginning to launch out into vague abuse of those who perhaps are wiser than you, were it not better first to make sure of the ground you are standing on?

Take, for instance, the case of coal now, which you quote.

You say that the price of coal should be regulated by the wages of the miners. The public, you say, must have coal; and you seem to think, whether the price be high or low, the public will want the same amount of coal; and therefore you propose to put all the mines under one company, to prevent mine-owners competing with one another, and thereby lowering prices and wages.

But don't you see that, in carrying out your proposal, the results would be just the very reverse of what you anticipate? Like other Socialists, in looking to immediate results, you forget the *ultimate* ones!

In the first place, the demand for coal is not, as you say, constant in quantity. Dear coal would, for instance, soon begin to lessen the demand. Coal is much wasted, and people would be more careful in using it. Moreover, petroleum, wood, peat, and water-power might be in time largely substituted, and thereby a less number

of miners would be required. The unemployed difficulty would reappear again. Foreign competition, too, would, under our present Free Trade system, prevent us from regulating the price of coal by the wages of our miners. The cheaper coal from abroad would cut us out in both home and foreign coal markets, and either turn our miners out of work or reduce their number of days' labour.

The present popular cry for what is called a "Living Wage" is natural enough in men unacquainted with economic laws; but when the Official Blue Books tell us that we export annually coal to the value of twenty million pounds, we at once begin to see that in giving our miners a "living wage," which should be a first charge on the cost of coal, we should probably not only lose this large export trade, but very possibly much of our home trade as well. A living wage means a higher wage than we can give now; but what is the good of a living wage if men only get it three days a week, or thirty weeks in the year? A smaller wage per day's work, and employment every day of the week, would, I take it, be quite as good for the miner.

Even under Protection, the only result of putting the mines all into the hands of the State, as Socialists propose, would be to create a coal monopoly, and to raise wages and the price of coal to the highest possible price at the expense of the producers in all other trades. And even then these high wages could not be maintained for long, unless both the numbers of miners and the

numbers of the nation were strictly regulated and controlled by the State; that is to say, unless our present free right of marriage were to be interfered with.

From the above, it will be seen then how impossible and impracticable would be any attempt to do away with competition altogether.

I see, again, you instance the case of the Cheshire Salt Trade. "There was," as you say, "a falling market there. Salt went a-begging. The salt manufacturers made no profits; the men got low wages. Why? Because one firm kept undercutting the other.

"But when the Salt Syndicate was formed the market rose. Why? Because all the salt was in the hands of one firm, and there was no competition. So the price of salt went up and remained up, until private firms were formed outside the Syndicate and competition began. Then, of course, the price came down."

Unfortunately, you forgot to add, "and *remained down*"; for during the time of the high prices asked by the Salt Syndicate for their salt our German rivals were cutting us out in the foreign markets and supplying India and other countries, which we had supplied before; thus taking the trade, in fact, permanently away from us.

From this it will be only too plainly gathered, that difficult as it would be to do away with competition, even under a Protection system, under Free Trade it is not only impossible, but ruinous at the same time.

I see again (p. 122), in a chapter further trying to expose the evils of competition, you have given your

readers four or five short illustrations of the way in which competition works, but, unfortunately, they are all of them entirely wrong and out of drawing.

Let us take the first and test it. "Suppose," you say, "two men had to get a cart up a hill. Would they get it up sooner if one tried to push it up and the other tried to push it down, or if both men tried to pull it up?"

But you will pardon me, "Nunquam," if I point out that this, as an illustration of competition, is nonsense! If you had said—Suppose two men had to get *two carts* up a hill, and the one that reached the top first had a good drink of beer given him, would they get their carts up hill sooner in that case than if they had no drink of beer in prospect? If you had illustrated competition in this way you would have been nearer the mark, I think.

Altogether, from what you say in Chapters X. and XVI. on the subject of Competition your views seem to me to be superficial, confused, and contradictory. In one place (p. 85) you say competition lowers prices, and in another (p. 126) you assert that it raises them!

Which do you mean? It is just as well to make up your mind.

Competition may be, as you say in your usual well-known uncompromising manner, "of all the many senseless and brutal theories practical men support, the most fatuous and bestial,"* but you do not prove your assertion, nor do you in the least degree attempt to

* "Merrie England," p. 121.

prove that it is not a necessary and wholesome stimulus to progress when properly controlled.

The real truth of the matter lies in the words of Arnold Toynbee, with which I will conclude this chapter:—"Competition, we have now learned, is neither good nor bad in itself; it is a force which has to be studied and controlled."*

* Toynbee's "Industrial Revolution."

VIII.

WASTE AND CHEAPNESS.

"The chief mode in which distribution has turned in favour of the labourer, is the fall of prices resulting from the competition of employers."—*Levy*.

CLOSELY allied with the subject considered in the last chapter, are the twin subjects of Waste and Cheapness.

In the chapter which you, "Nunquam," write upon Waste, I see you make the somewhat startling assertion that "cheapness (p. 87) is never good for the producer;" and thence you go on to expound your occult and mysterious "Theory of Waste."

Before examining this redoubtable theory—"Nunquam's own," as one might call it)—let us see whether cheapness *is*, as you say, *never* good for the producer or working class.

Now it is as plain as a pikestaff that if one sort of produce, say corn, is cheapened, then all workmen employed in producing other materials, like cotton or iron, will benefit by this cheapness.

And, conversely, if one branch of industry gets a rise of wage, and so increases the cost of its manufac-

tured products, that branch of industry will profit at the expense of all other branches.

Cheapness therefore is clearly good for the *producer* when not accompanied by a general fall in wages, or by a discharge of workmen. When, as is often the case, it is the result of some newly-invented labour-saving machinery in one particular industry, then cheapness is evidently good for those employed in all other industries, for they can of course buy the product of that particular industry for less money.

We should never forget, however, that in such a case, the *general* good is accompanied by the *particular* harm; and in the large number of men thrown out of work by each successive new labour-saving machine, the cheapness it brings to the many is much depreciated by the dearness it brings to the few.

New inventions of machinery do undoubtedly cheapen things, but tens of thousands of honest workmen are thereby displaced and sent to swell the dreary ranks of the unemployed; and when, as in the case of food, we find cheapness not only increases our unemployed, but ruins our agriculture and drives us to the very serious danger of dependence on foreigners for food, we begin to see that cheap things may sometimes perhaps be dear, and that even this rage for cheapness may, like everything else, be carried too far—may indeed become fanatical.

Coleridge, the great poet-philosopher, saw this sixty years ago, when he wrote in his "Table Talk" as follows:—"You speak about making an article cheaper

by reducing its price from 10d. to 8d. But suppose, in doing so, you have rendered your country weaker against a foreign foe; suppose you have demoralised thousands of your fellow-countrymen, and have sown discontent between one class and another; your article is tolerably dear, I take it, after all."

And so most assuredly we are beginning in England to find out. When some fifty years ago, in the days of Bright and Cobden, we ran up our industrial mast-head the signal, "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," we thought within our hearts that we had solved the sphinx-like riddle of curing human distress and misery, and that all mankind would follow our example. Indeed, many people prophesied at the time that Free Trade would within a few years shut up the poor-houses, and bring plenty and prosperity to all; much as Socialists now prophesy about Socialism.

But what has happened? Why simply this: that other nations were not silly enough to be carried away by our fit of hasty if generous (?) enthusiasm; they saw deeper into things than we did, and made up their minds that it would be only a false kind of cheapness to eat cheap food and the ignominy of dependence on others for it at the same time. They therefore wisely refused to bow their heads to the new false Brummagem god of Free Trade, and sagaciously preferred their national independence of others for food, even if they had to pay a little higher price for it.

Now in the above example we see one of the best

illustrations of how *apparent* cheapness may perhaps be practically dear.

The examples which you, "Nunquam," give (pp. 88 and 91) of the Match and Salt Trades, do not appear to me so convincing.

You see a drunken man wasting matches in trying to light his pipe; and from this particular incident you immediately rush at the general conclusion that everybody wastes matches like the drunken man. Thence your mind wanders off to the wretched wages and long hours of the match-makers; and seeing that matches are wasted because they are cheap, you suggest that if the price of matches were doubled, the makers would receive double wages, and people would cease to waste them.

Now, the weak point about your argument here is that you seem to think the way of a drunken man with matches is characteristic of all men, drunk or sober. Apart from the delicacy of the compliment you pay mankind in thinking as you do, your estimate of public wastefulness is a very questionable one, I think. Speaking from experience, I can only say that it seems to me to be, like much that you assert, very much exaggerated. People do *not* waste half their matches.

And so of the Salt Trade, which you bring forward later on. It is an exaggeration to say that half the salt is wasted, and still more an exaggeration to say, that if the price were doubled, the consumer would get all the salt he wanted *at the same price as before!*

And if we apply your ideas to other trades, they seem even more exaggerated and foolish still.

You may think this "theory of waste solves the problem," and that "yours is a practical, hard-headed way of looking at things;" but I should rather call it soft-headed, if you were to ask me. When you accuse "newspaper editors again of wasting pen, ink, and paper, and perpetrating follies and lies," does it not occur to you that you are a newspaper editor yourself? When again you set yourself up as "the sensible person" who is to put these same miserable newspaper editors and their lies to confusion, do you, after writing so much that is exaggerated and inaccurate, really expect us to take you at your own estimated valuation?

I see you quote at the head of your chapter some lines of Hood's:—

"O God, that bread should be so dear!
And flesh and blood so cheap!"

But surely no "sensible person" would have quoted such lines at a time like the present, when bread is cheaper than ever it was known to be in the history of this country! No sensible man either would say, as you do (p. 92), that "cheap goods mean cheap labour." Every sensible man knows very well that cheap goods are more often *the result of new inventions in machinery*, than of cheap labour. For if not, I would ask, along with that "stupid parson" (all parsons are, of course, stupid in your eyes), how it is, that, *whereas commodities are now almost*

universally cheaper than they were, wages are almost universally higher?

Yet this is a *fact*, acknowledged and attested by all who are acquainted with the subject.

And yet, whilst thus pointing out your exaggerations and your weakness of argument, think not, friend "Nunquam," that I am wanting in sympathy for those poor match-makers working so long for such pitiful wages?

Theirs is indeed, like that of their poor shirt-making sisters, a hard case; and gladly would I join you in trying to alleviate it. With your proposed methods, however, I cannot quite agree. I cannot see that doubling the price of shirts, for instance, would lead to only half as many being used, and, therefore, the shirt-makers' hours of work being reduced by half. What I *do* see is that, with our present Free Trade system, which puts us in a position to compete on an equality with foreign labour, the cheaper labour abroad would soon undersell us, and our poor shirt-makers, being thus thrown out of employment, would be in a worse position than before! Mind you, I am not here favouring Free Trade, but merely pointing out what would happen now, if the price of shirts were doubled. Of course, under the proposed Socialist *régime*, all this might be altered, and these same poor match- and shirt-makers *might* get shorter hours and better wages, but that remains yet to be proved. As I have said before, pigs might fly!

What I think is quite sufficiently proved in this chapter

is that, during the past century, whilst eagerly welcoming the introduction of every new invention in machinery for cheapening production, we have at the same time most cruelly and thoughtlessly forgotten to give any sort of help or compensation to the vast multitudes of poor workmen, whom those inventions have from time to time thrown out of employment.

Another point sufficiently proved, I think, is that, in the particular case of our food supply, Cheapness is an extremely doubtful benefit, ruining our agriculture as it does; driving large numbers of peasants off the land to swell the ranks of the unemployed; and, in case of war, very seriously endangering our national existence.

As to the subject of Waste, no doubt there is, as you say, "Nunquam," a very great deal wasted in consequence of mere cheapness of the thing wasted. But there is another form of waste which you have artfully omitted to point out, which in my opinion is perhaps quite as important, if not more so; and that is the enormous sum of money spent every year on Drink by our workers. Nearly £160,000,000 annually, or about £15 by every man in England, on the average, is wasted on intoxicating liquors; and the waste that goes on in workmen's houses from ignorance of cooking on the part of their wives is melancholy to think of.

Betting and Gambling, too, are increasing features of modern life, and the waste our workmen suffer from in this direction is no slight one.

But you, "Nunquam," along with other Socialists,

know well the art of flattering men's prejudices. It would not "pay" to act the part of candid friend; and therefore you carefully omit to mention this side of the question.

Whether, in so doing, your action is fair, or one-sided and false, I leave others to judge.

IX.

SOCIALISM.

"One of the company said unto him, Master, speak unto my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. But he (Jesus) said, Man, who made me a judge or divider over you? Take heed of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesseth."—*Gospel*.

"A theory concerning government may become as much a cause of fanaticism as a dogma in religion."—*Burke*.

"The equality for which we are pleading is an equality that would succeed to a state of great intellectual improvement. So bold a revolution cannot take place in human affairs till the general mind has been highly cultivated. Hasty and indigested tumults may take place, under the idea of equalisation of property; but it is only a calm and clear conviction of justice mutually to be rendered and received, of happiness to be produced by the desertion of our most rooted habits, that can introduce a system of this sort. Attempts without this preparation will be productive only of confusion."—*Godwin*.

SOCIALISM is no new thing, as many long-eared people seem to think. It first began to show itself seriously, in an elementary, unscientific form, in the writings of an Englishman—Langland by name—during the fourteenth century, whose well-known book, "Piers Ploughman," had much the same influence in stirring up discontent and revolution amongst the people then, as "Looking Backward" and "Merrie England" have now.

Again, in the sixteenth century Sir Thomas More's book, "Utopia," had a similar influence; and in the eighteenth century Socialism appeared once more in Rousseau's writings, which became indeed text-books for the French Revolutionists at the end of last century, who founded thereon their famous principles of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

It was from Rousseau that Robespierre, St. Just, and other great agitators drew their inspiration and ideas during the first great Social Revolution in France; and it was their blind, fanatical, and relentless determination to carry those ideas into practice, at any cost, that turned France during two years (1793-94) into a human shambles, and made it groan under the most cruel tyranny the world has ever seen.

It was the Socialistic Fanaticism of these revolutionary agitators that sent tens of thousands of their countrymen to the scaffold, merely for a difference of political opinion. Nay, even the *relatives* of those who were unfortunate enough to differ from them were arrested, and their heads shorn off on the scaffold by the guillotine. Finally, after making the streets of all the towns in France literally run with human blood; after fusillading and drowning their fellow-countrymen in batches wholesale; after confiscating the property of the rich, burning their country-houses, and persecuting them in every way,—after thus bringing their country into a most frightful state of confusion, misery, and debt,—these precious social agitators, these benevolent preachers of

Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, suddenly found themselves, much to their surprise, mounting the very scaffold that they had themselves employed in executing so many thousands of their fellow-citizens.

As was said at the time, the Revolution devoured its own children. But whilst thus giving a slight sketch of the first great French Revolution, I should add, in justice to present-day Socialism, that the early Socialism of these leaders of the French Labour Party was of a more elementary and less dogmatic kind than the clearly-defined so-called scientific Socialism of to-day, and merely consisted in a desire to bring about greater equality of conditions.

It was not till the year 1847 that Socialism in its cut-and-dried modern form, with its regularly drawn-up dogmas and aims, first made its appearance; and it was in consequence of these new Socialistic aims and dogmas which were then disseminated amongst the Parisian populace, that a frightfully bloody insurrection broke out in the following year (1848); when during three hot days in June, the streets of Paris literally ran with blood, and when it is estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 citizens and soldiers lost their lives in the street fighting.

Again, after an interval of twenty years or more, the workmen of Paris made a desperate attempt, on the departure of the German army after the siege in 1871, to capture the reins of government, and put their Socialist ideas into practice. But after holding Paris against the government troops for two months, they were driven from

their positions, and after more furious fighting in the streets, the loss on both sides of another 40,000 men, and the burning down of some of the grandest buildings in Paris, the Socialists or Communists—as they were then called—were forced to surrender, and the troops of the French Republican Government remained masters of the situation.

After this crushing blow in 1871 Socialism seemed for a time to die out in France, and take refuge in Germany, where it soon spread and organised itself, under the leadership of Bebel and Leibnecht, who founded the Social Democratic Party. It was not until 1881, when Henry George brought out his famous book, "Progress and Poverty," that Socialism first began to spread in England; but ever since then we have been more or less familiar with it; Socialism has been "in the air," and the publication in quick succession of such books as "Looking Backward," the "Fabian Essays," and "Merrie England," has contributed not a little to popularise and disseminate Socialistic views amongst us.

I have given the above rough little sketch of the history of Socialism, because it is often unknown even to Socialists themselves, and when known, discreetly kept in the background. I will now examine the Socialism of to-day as described in "Merrie England."

English Socialism, unlike continental, does not believe in violent insurrections, but puts its trust in constitutional means; that is to say, in winning the

majority of voters over to its views, and then carrying those views into practice by Acts of Parliament.

These views are tersely put down in "Merrie England" as follows:—"Practical Socialism is so simple that a child may understand it. It is a kind of national scheme of co-operation managed by the State. Its programme consists essentially of one demand, that the land and other instruments of production shall be the common property of the people, and shall be used and governed by the people for the people.

"Make the land and all the instruments of production State property; put all farms, mines, mills, ships, shops, and railways under State control, as you have already put the postal and telegraphic services under State control; and Practical Socialism is accomplished."*

And now, having thus had the matter laid before us, as it were, in a nutshell, let us see on what grounds, "Nunquam," you base your belief that the stupendous revolution you are so "cock-sure" of accomplishing could be brought about. Your grounds, it appears, are simply and solely as follows, namely, that "the postal and telegraphic service is the standing proof of the capacity of the State to manage the public business with economy and success."*

Now this at first sight seems specious, plausible, and convincing enough; but if looked into more attentively, it will be found to be a very weak and unsubstantial

* "Merrie England," p. 100.

argument indeed. For the plain fact of the matter is, that between the State management of the postal service, and the State management of the cotton trade, for instance, there is absolutely no practical analogy whatever.

And for this clear and very simple reason, namely, that one is a *distributive* business; the other a *productive* one.

Now we know very well, that though Co-operative Distribution has been a great and ever-advancing success in England, Co-operative Production has been more or less a failure. Go to Oldham and inquire into the history of the co-operative cotton-mills there, and you will find what I say is correct.

Co-operative Production being thus proved a failure, compared with private production, it follows then, necessarily, that the gigantic scheme of co-operative production which the Socialists and Labour Party propose to carry out, would be a failure in like manner. Thus the great Socialist argument, upon which they found their belief, is, upon close inspection, found to be fallacious, and therefore falls to the ground.

In short, Nationalisation of the Means of Production, or State Co-operative Production, would not "pay." And this is precisely what no less an authority than Mr. Gladstone has told us himself. Speaking at Hawarden, on September 23rd, 1889, he said:—"I think the nationalisation of the land, if it means the simple plunder of the proprietors, is robbery. I think national-

isation of the land, even with compensation, would be folly; because the State is not qualified to exercise the functions of a landlord. It would overburden and break down the State."

Ardent young Socialists may, perhaps, think Gladstone an "old fossil"; but they must admit, that a man of such keen intellect and far-reaching experience is worthy of a respectful hearing.

And just the same opinion that Gladstone holds is held by that ardent Radical, Professor Thorold Rogers. Writing in his famous book, "The Economic Interpretation of History," his words are as follows:—"In any Nationalisation of the Land, the new Land Office would swarm with jobs! Mr. George's scheme of confiscating the land would be an injustice; that of Mr. Mill for buying out the landlords, an act of impolicy."

But not only is the analogy which Socialists are so fond of drawing between the State Postal Service and the State Manufacture of everything, faulty in the way indicated above; but in yet another way, it is, if possible, even more faulty still.

The Postal and Telegraphic Service has no cheap foreign labour to compete with. It is a monopoly. Foreign competition does not touch it at all. But with our land and manufactures a quite different state of affairs exists. Foreign competition of a very keen kind is, year by year, making it more and more difficult for our farmers and traders to hold their own.

From the above you will see then, friend "Nunquam,"

that this Postal Service argument is not quite so convincing a one as you Socialists endeavour to make it appear. You seem, indeed, to have given it only the most hasty and superficial investigation.

And when you come to discuss the ways and means of nationalising private property, you do not appear to be on much firmer ground. The land and all the instruments of production, you say, must be made the property of the nation. But when you touch the question of *Compensation*, you tell us that "personally you are *against* it, though you suppose it would have to be given; your only hope is that it would be kept as low as possible."*

But whilst here asserting that you are in favour of taking away private property, without giving Compensation, you say, almost in the same breath, that "Socialism does not consist in violently seizing upon the property of the rich and sharing it out amongst the poor;"† and in another place you wax virtuously indignant and assert that "it is a wilful, wicked lie to say that Socialists are dishonest people, who wish to take the wealth of others and enjoy it themselves."‡

I don't quite know how you reconcile these conflicting statements, which seem flatly to contradict each other. Perhaps you will explain?

Whatever "wicked" people may say about the intentions of Socialists, that amiable gentleman—Keir Hardie, the leader of the Independent Labour Party—has clearly given us to understand that he and his are not going to

* "Merrie England," p. 107. † *Ibid.* p. 99. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 74.

let such old-fashioned scruples as honour or justice interfere with them in this matter, but in dealing with property, are going to be as independent of justice as of honour and common sense. Taxation, to extinction of all unearned increment, is their programme; and so, every man who has saved a few pounds and invested them in a savings bank, etc., will have his money forcibly taken away from him! And yet it never seems to occur to these precious, self-righteous Puritans and Pharisees, who are for ever prating of their "implacable honesty and terrible justice,"* that in thus acting, they would be taxing the accumulated savings of the nation; striking a deadly blow at the virtues of Thrift and Providence; leading the nation to live on its capital; and committing the most gigantic act of national theft, injustice, and dishonesty the world has ever seen! Moreover, they entirely appear to ignore the frightful civil war they would assuredly plunge the country into, if they tried to put their views into practice; for, though a majority might possibly vote for the confiscation of private property, a large minority would not tamely submit to such an outrage, but with arms in their hands would defend themselves effectually.

But even if Compensation were to be given, and it were to be made "as low as possible," I don't quite see where it would come from. Suppose, for instance, you were to begin with nationalising the land, and giving the expropriated owners a "low compensation" of, say, two-

* "Merrie England," p. 75.

thirds its estimated value, which would mean about £1,200,000,000, how would you raise the money? You could only get it, of course, by borrowing; and already the National Debt of nearly £700,000,000, and the Municipal Debt of nearly £300,000,000, is quite heavy enough for the British tax-payer to bear. How, then, could he stand his rates and taxes doubling?

The idea is of course preposterous. Thus we see plainly that nationalisation of property with Compensation is impracticable; without Compensation, unjust and dishonourable! "To decree Injustice by law," says Carlyle, "is the Throne of Iniquity. It is certain that if we sin against God, His judgments will overtake us."

And nowhere was this truth so well exemplified as in the case of the American Civil War thirty years ago. The American Civil War was caused by national dishonesty. The Northern States wanted very rightly to do away with slavery in the Southern. They had no occasion to use slaves themselves, the cold, northern climate not being favourable to them; but they wanted to do away with slavery without compensating the owners, not caring to follow the honest example set by England in 1833, when she bought out the slaves in her West Indian Colonies at a cost of £20,000,000.

What was the consequence of this national dishonesty on the part of the Northern States of America? Why, simply this—one of the most frightful and bloody civil wars; lasting four years, and causing an enormous loss of life and a huge waste of money. America had in fact to

pay infinitely more than the price the slaves would have come to, besides suffering all the misery and wretchedness of the war. Frightfully did the Americans pay for their national dishonesty.

And just as America suffered, so should we English suffer, were we to decree injustice by law, as Socialists propose. It might not be in the same way altogether; it might not be by fighting—by a Civil War,—though one cannot be sure about that; but in some way or other God's righteous judgment would inevitably fall on us, and bitterly should we be made to repent our wrongdoing.

But not only would Socialism thus fail in its endeavour to secure greater comfort for the people, by confiscating the property of the rich; but even if it were to commit such a huge act of injustice and impolicy, the working classes would receive no *real permanent* economic benefit therefrom. The increased income of the labourer would only result in a corresponding increase in his family, and thus the improvement in his condition would only be temporary.

Moreover, Consumption would be largely increased; Savings largely decreased; and thus the nation would sooner or later begin to live on its capital. The stored wealth of the capitalist, which now goes on growing and increasing every year, would, under a Socialist *régime*, all be brought into the Common Collective Fund for providing the daily wants of the people; and so urgent would be the daily demands made upon it, that in a

very short time, the nation's wealth, instead of steadily increasing as it has hitherto done, would begin rapidly to decline, and our condition would be far worse than before.

As Mr. Levy says:—"A brief and brilliant span of existence may be attained by a Socialistic State living on the capital of its predecessors; but it soon runs through this capital, and goes out like a spent squib, and makes a nasty smell." *

And when we pass from the Economic and Material to the Moral and Intellectual side of Socialism, we find equally small grounds for expecting a change for the better. For Socialists lay it down as one of the dogmatic articles of their creed, that Religion is a private affair; that marriage should be Civil, and Divorce easy; and that children should be fed, clothed, and educated at the expense and under the direction of the State; thus dealing an absolutely crushing blow at Religious Faith, the Marriage Tie, and Family Affection,—three of the most ancient, cherished, and sacred features in our lives, the absence of which would inevitably tend to produce immediate moral degeneration.

For, as Lamartine says—"Communism of goods leads as a necessary consequence to Communism of wives, children, and parents; and to the brutalisation of the species." †

It is indeed probable that what is called by Socialists

* Levy, "Outcome of Individualism."

† Lamartine's "History of Revolution of 1848."

in euphuistic terms Free Love, and by Christianity by the more uncompromising term of the "deadly sin of Fornication," would, under a Socialistic government, soon become universal. English Socialists, I know, rather shy at this part of their programme, but it is nevertheless rigidly adhered to by their continental brethren.

And yet what a world ! in which the comforting religious hope of immortality had died out ; in which the refining influences of marriage had given place to the selfish, vulgar, and degrading influence of promiscuous intercourse ; in which filial and parental love, affection, and duty no more came to brighten daily life, and improve and strengthen the character ; in which the control of children was taken from the hands of their parents, and vested in the hands of the all-powerful despotic State !

And when we come to examine the life Socialists promise to provide for us, what a dull, monotonous, common-place existence it would be ! Promising, as they do, equal happiness for all, they yet leave the personal tastes of one set of people always at the disposal of another set of people ; forgetting apparently that there are as many different views as to wherein happiness consists as there are differences of taste and character. Subjecting every action of our lives to the official inspector's eye, and destroying all privacy, or individuality of character, Socialism would exercise an intolerable interference with our liberty, and almost destroy the privacy of home life. Eating and drinking in public ;

working in public ; doing everything in public, what a life of noisy, vulgar, and monotonous uniformity it would be !

We see then from the above, that Socialism is both unpractical, irreligious, and immoral in its aims and ends. In spite of the specious promises it makes of the Future, that Future would be intolerable to live in.

That the premises or theoretical foundations of Socialism are false, I have already shown in a previous chapter (IV.). That its methods are unscrupulous, I will prove further on in Chapter XV.

X.

THE INCENTIVE OF GAIN.

"Individual interest is the indispensable incentive to labour and economy."—*De Tocqueville*.

"The higher abilities will not yield their fruit save in an atmosphere of Freedom. What a high-spirited man would give of his own free-will, he would refuse to force."—*Levy*.

WE will now proceed to consider some of the stock arguments used in favour of Socialism.

One of the chief of these is that Self-Interest (the interest a man feels in himself, his wife, and his family) is not so strong as the interest he feels in the community at large; and that if Socialism were once introduced, a man would work harder for the good of the community than he does now for his own benefit!

This at first sight seems a marvellous strange doctrine; one, indeed, very like nonsense; but it is a doctrine that Socialists hold, nevertheless.

And not only do they actually believe, or pretend to believe it, but they even assert that those who disagree with them are "entirely mistaken and densely ignorant of human nature." Socialists are certainly nothing if not bold.

The natural interest a man feels in himself and his family, Socialists term "grab and greed." The individual who would prefer working for himself and family to working for the good of his fellow-men, they designate by the amiable title of "a grabbing, grasping Gradgrind."* They assert that political economists like Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Professor Marshall are "stupid and shallow" in saying that Self-Interest is the chief incentive to labour; and they endeavour to prove that "Vanity, love of approbation, love of art, love of knowledge, love of truth, are each and all stronger motives in the average man's life than love of gain."†

They say that it is "a brutal theory" to assert otherwise, and express their amiable argumentative ability "to overthrow Gradgrind and his brutal theories, and bury him and them in the ruins of his arguments of ashes and of his defences of clay."‡

Let us then look at the Socialist arguments and test them. These, so far as I can ascertain, are three in number. I will consider them seriatim.

The first argument is, that since men strive to do their best at cricket and football, rowing and cycling, without the hope of a single penny of gain, therefore one might fairly expect they would, without hope of gain, strive to do their best at the common drudgery of every-day work.§

* "Merrie England," p. 116.

† *Ibid.*, p. 119.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Now this, in spite of the well-known professionalism that is unhappily creeping into football, seems at first sight a plausible argument enough.

Mr. Stoddart, or Shrewsbury the professional, no doubt play their best at cricket, without thought of pay; but where is the analogy between a congenial and exciting game, voluntarily entered upon of one's own free will, and a dull daily occupation, which is possibly uncongenial, and not in any way voluntary?

You will pardon me, good "Nunquam," but I don't quite see where the analogy comes in. That every one would be able under a Socialist *régime* to choose his own occupation, you have yourself confessed would be impossible. Some, therefore, would have to do the dirty work, as they have to do now; and you think that they would do it with the same alacrity and spirit with which a great cricketer like Mr. Stoddart cracks up his hundred runs before an applauding and excited crowd!

Really some people's credulity is marvellous.

Between Mr. Stoddart, and an ordinary man engaged in scavenging, say, or monotonously feeding a boiler, what a difference of occupation, surroundings, and capability!

And yet you seem to ignore all this! As a very able writer has said—"To confuse work with play is indeed short-sighted reasoning. But confounding *compulsory work* with *voluntary play* hardly rises to the level of reasoning at all." *

* "Socialism Tested by Facts." (O'Brien.)

Nor is there much more reasoning in the other analogies you bring forward. You say, that since a soldier will risk his life heroically for a tiny bronze cross, and not for a monetary reward, therefore the average individual will act like the soldier, in the monotonous labour of every-day life !

“The soldier’s subsistence is certain, and does not depend on his exertions ; but once he becomes susceptible to appeals to his patriotism, to his *esprit de corps*, to the honour of his flag, he will dare anything for glory, and value a bit of bronze, which is the reward of valour, far more than a hundred its weight in gold.”

So says the author of the “Fabian Essays” ; but he is surely not very complimentary to the intelligence of his readers, if he thinks they will accept as sound, the analogy which he here draws between a soldier on the battlefield and a workman engaged at his dull, daily task. It certainly does not require much knowledge of average human nature to perceive, that the unusually violent excitement of a field of battle will urge a man to deeds of heroism, that the daily routine of ordinary life would be entirely unable to inspire him to perform.

Again ; if the conduct of a few exceptional soldiers on the field of battle is in nowise any criterion of the average tinker or tailor’s behaviour in the dull drudgery of daily existence ; the lives of the few rare and exceptional men of genius are even a less reliable criterion still.

To select a few of the very greatest men that ever

lived, and expect every Tom, Dick, and Harry to live up to their high standard, seems to me the height of absurdity. And yet in one part of "Merrie England" I see you ask, "Was it greed made Socrates expound philosophy, or Shakespeare write plays? Was it competition made Watt invent the steam engine, or Davy the safety-lamp, or Wheatstone the telegraph? Was it greed made Darwin devote his life to science? Did greed give us the printing-press, the pictures of Turner and Raphael, the poems of Spenser, or the liberties of the English Constitution?"*

I don't quite see what the liberties of the English Constitution have got to do with the subject; but I will venture to say that, in the first place, even these few great ones of the earth and of all ages were spurred on to their marvellous works in large measure by *Need*, if not by Greed. And besides, here again, the simplest man must see, that to draw any sort of analogy between the motives that inspire the highly intellectual work of a rare genius like Shakespeare or Darwin, and the dull, monotonous labour of the average manual worker, is, on the face of it, ridiculous.

You say, "Nunquam," that the true artist's motive in working is love of his art, and that "a really great-souled man would spurn" any more pay than what was enough to buy him the mere necessities of life; and from this you appear to think everybody in a Socialist state of society would act like "a great-souled man."

* "Merrie England," p. 138.

But why on earth people should be expected to become full-blown angels with the advent of Socialism I cannot imagine. You acknowledge that at present "Heroes are scarce, and that at a time when the demand for a hero is pressing, the supply has failed;"* and yet at the same time, you seem to expect every one in your Socialist kingdom to act like a hero.

The thing is absurd; and what is more, you know it is; for in another place (p. 114) you confess that "man, though working out his development in an upward direction, is still far from the summit;" and on an earlier page of your book, you "give yourself away" still further, by acknowledging with sorrow, that "wealth and power are prized and honoured more than industry, wisdom, or virtue."†

If, then, heroes and great-souled men are, on your own showing, scarce; if, too, men are only half developed, as you say; if power and wealth are honoured more than wisdom or virtue, is it not somewhat unreasonable to fly madly in the face of the very facts you acknowledge, and assert that love of esteem is a more powerful motive in making a man work than love of gain? Surely a more gross and palpable case of flat self-contradiction is rarely to be met with. It is of no use at all to point to a few exceptional men of genius like Shakespeare, Darwin, etc., and say that if they could work for love of their work alone, so can the rest of the world. Unfortunately we are not all great poets, scientists, artists, etc.; we are not all

* "Merrie England," p. 140.

† *Ibid.*, p. 38.

heroes and "great-souled men"; we are not all made alike.

The idea of the butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker pursuing their respective trades with spirit and enthusiasm out of pure love of their work, for the good of their neighbours, uninfluenced by any thought of pay,—such an idea is at once as unpractical as it is absurd! It betrays a lack of knowledge of human nature almost grotesque; an optimistic belief in the unselfishness of humanity altogether unwarrantable.

The butcher or baker is not a bad sort of fellow, but if you expect him suddenly to become a hero, an angel, or a "great-souled man," your credulity is stronger than your understanding. "Great hopes," they say, "have lean offspring." However heroic we may desire men should be, it is, as a great German philosopher* tells us, "of no use to complain of low aims, for, whatever people may say, they rule the world."

Let us then resign ourselves somewhat to the fact, and not expect mankind always to be at high pressure in their generous unselfishness. Let us take human nature as it is; and not as it might be, should be, and on some rare occasions is. Let us, in a word, friend "Nunquam," be practical, sensible, and not indulge in high "falutin"; and we shall get on much better in trying to make life happier, I think.

Human nature is not going to change all at once at the mere blast of the Socialist trumpet. As Herbert Spencer

* Schopenhauer.

says:—"Unless we suppose that men's natures will suddenly be exalted, we must conclude that the pursuit of private interests will sway the doings of all the component classes in a Socialistic society."* The desire for approbation, the love of knowledge, is not as strong in mankind, as the desire for money and what money will bring.

Physical excitement, animal pleasures, and the thirst for gain, to be able to enjoy them, constitute the active principles of nine-tenths of mankind, and it is useless to try and argue otherwise.

To try and substitute general benevolence for private selfishness as the motor-power in urging men to extra efforts is manifestly unpractical. "Socialists may say, that under their system, generosity and love of approbation will do the work of self-interest. *But compulsory regulation is fatal to generosity.* The generous man can only be generous in his own way. Dictate to him, compel him to do and give, not in his way, but in yours, or in that of the majority, and you take all heart out of his gifts and all desire on his part to give. There is no generosity where there is not freedom to give or to withhold. Generosity follows personal judgment and feelings."† Men, therefore, under a system of compulsory Socialism would not give their best services to the community, nor would they even try to develop them. Experience of Socialist societies in America tells us this,

* Spencer's "Plea for Liberty."

† O'Brien, "Socialism Tested by Facts."

for there we learn the general tendency amongst them is to be satisfied with poor results ; to rest content with a dull, ugly, commonplace existence ; and to form habits of indolence and sloth. The people who live the Socialist or Communal life there, seem, in fact, to never rise above one dull and sleepy humdrum level. All the vivacity which high aims and the hope of attaining them give to men in our present social system, seems to be altogether wanting amongst these Socialist communities in America.

If then combined love of approbation and of the community is unable to produce better results, when the workers enter into the communal life *willingly* and with zeal, how can we expect better results when a large minority will be coerced into accepting Socialist conditions of life compulsorily, much against their will? And yet this is what would happen if Socialists had their way, for they swear by majorities, even if they be only majorities of one !

From the above arguments I think it will be seen that self-interest, that is, the natural preference a man feels in providing for himself, his wife, and family, is a stronger motive to exertion than either love of the community at large or desire for approbation.

It may suit you, "Nunquam," to call this natural human feeling by the obnoxious term of Greed, since men are, they say, governed more by words than things. But that will only deceive the very ignorant and unthinking. Self-interest no doubt does sometimes ripen into Greed, and when it unfortunately does so, the State should take

measures to prevent it if possible. But in its earlier manifestation, that is to say when exercised in moderation, self-interest is as *natural* and *necessary* a principle in human nature as any other ; and he who would try to do away with it entirely, as Socialists propose, shows himself to be a mere fanatic, flying in the face of nature, and aiming at the impossible. Self-interest does not want abolishing, it wants controlling ; and a law of graduated income-tax might easily be brought in and passed to secure that object. It is not the use, but the abuse of self-regarding interests, which is so hurtful to others, and which is rightly termed Greed.

As to your passing remarks on the House of Commons, Lord Rosebery, etc., I will say nothing, except that they are as irrelevant as they are unjustifiable and rude. To call the House of Commons, as you do on page 115, "a place where aggression and vulgarity and rascality and selfish presumption are the elements of success," is in itself as libellous and impudent on your part, as it is presumptuous to sneer at Lord Rosebery for "polishing up his flimsy epigrams in his study," or to ask John Morley "if he really knows *anything* about the condition of the country" (p. 142).

This kind of vulgar abuse may possibly appeal to the ignorance and envy of the lower class of readers ; but it certainly will disgust those who prefer gentlemanly methods of discussion.

XI.

SOCIALISM AND SLAVERY.

"The People may desire to oppress a part of their number ; and precautions are needed against this, as much as against any other abuse of power. The tyranny of the majority is now generally included among the evils against which society requires to be on its guard. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence ; and to find that limit and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs, as protection against political despotism."

"We have a warning example in China, which has succeeded beyond all hope in what English philanthropists are so sedulously working at—in making a people all alike, governing their thoughts and actions by the same maxims and rules ; and yet China has been stationary. Unless individuality shall be able to assert itself successfully against this yoke, Europe will tend to become another China."—*Mill on "Liberty."*

SOME short time ago, Mr. Herbert Spencer, the great philosopher, wrote an article called "The Coming Slavery," wherein he endeavoured to prove, that Socialism would result in a more odious form of slavery than the world has ever known.

You, "Nunquam," in your book, "Merrie England," not only deny that Socialism would result in any form of slavery at all, but you carry the war into the enemy's

camp, and assert, unhesitatingly, that a most odious form of slavery exists at present in this so-called free country!

Let us then consider the arguments for and against what you say, and see whether you or Herbert Spencer have the best of it.

In the first place you say, that under Socialism, the State would *not* compel men to work against their will, or at uncongenial occupations (p. 143); but on the very next page you flatly contradict yourself by saying that if they declined to work, they would certainly have to starve or leave the State.

Here is a piece of complete self-stultification to begin with.

If men who decline work will have to starve or quit the State, the very strongest form of compulsion will apparently be employed, it appears, under the new Socialist *régime*. There will be no place for the tramp or loafer there; all will be compelled to work.

But you say "all are *now* compelled to work or starve. There will therefore only be this difference between present conditions and the conditions under Socialism—namely, that whereas we now work long hours for a bare subsistence, we should in a Socialist state work short hours for a life of comfort and honour."*

Now let me observe, in the first place, that the mere assertion that we "shall work short hours for a life of honour and comfort" is no sort of proof at all that your

* "Merrie England," p. 145.

prophecy will turn out true. "Never prophesy unless you know," as Artemus Ward said. Proofs are better than promises any day; and so far as I can gather from the reports of Socialist societies in America, there appears to be neither short hours of work, nor any high standard of comfort amongst them. Life in common seems to be a very dull and uninteresting affair. And, moreover, they are only able to eke out a poor, tame, monotonous existence by a *strict practice of celibacy*.

It appears then more than probable that, if Socialism were introduced, we should have to regulate births and marriages and put an end to the present liberty a man has of marrying when he likes, and limiting the number of his children according to his own wishes.

Here then is one of the kinds of slavery which Socialism would bring upon us; and it is well that the friends of Socialism should not shirk and evade this contingency, as they generally do, but look it fairly and squarely in the face. There is indeed a united consensus of opinion that the advent of Socialism would increase the population so fast, that the State would have to step in and forbid marriage altogether, except under certain onerous conditions, much heavier than they are now. Mrs. Fawcett confirms this in her admirable little hand-book on Economics:—"Socialism necessitates celibacy," she says, "and consequently intolerable Government control."

"The most important principle," says Professor Pearson, "Socialism will have to face is, that Society

shall reproduce herself from the best stock, and not from the poorest mentally and physically, as is so largely the case now. The Population question will be the legacy, and no enviable one, which the Individualist past hands down to the Socialist future.”*

In other words, under Socialism, a very large number of the more poorly-developed young men and women in our large manufacturing towns would be forbidden to marry, and so be deprived of the chief pleasure of their lives.

In this way, then, we see where to some extent Mr. Spencer's talk about Socialist Slavery comes in.

But in another matter—that of free right to choose one's own occupation or profession—I agree with you, “Nunquam,” in saying that we have no such right now, or at least the great majority of us have not. We might all like to be merchants, doctors, architects, engineers, etc., but in starting life we generally have to enter that trade or occupation wherein there appears to be the best opening, not the trade of our choice. And so it would be under Socialism. Under this head, then, things would be much the same under Socialism as they are now.

When, however, you go on to say that the bulk of the people are slaves already under present conditions, slaves not to a wise, beneficent, and popular Government, “but to a ring of greedy, grasping fools, a coterie of rich barbarians, who would boil down the last nightingale if

* Pearson on “Woman and Labour,” *Fortnightly Review*.

they thought his bones would serve to dye yarn; who would choke up the last well if they had no place handy in which to shoot their alkali dust, and would cover the last rood of sward with ashes if they thought there was no hope of grinding the said ashes with sewer slime to make mortar for the people's houses,"—when you let yourself off and "run a-muck" in this fashion, one can only smile and feel sorry for you and the state of mind to which you have brought yourself. As Bottom the weaver says, in Shakespeare's play—"This is 'Ercles' vein—a tyrant's vein."

However much our people's lives may be lacking in the good things of this world, it is gross *exaggeration* to call them slaves.

Some indeed are, as Kingsley said, "*Slaves to beer and spirits, and to every noisy, bawling spouter who flatters their self-conceit and stirs up bitterness and head-long rage within them;*" but it is not true to say that the great bulk of working people are slaves.

Your true slave cannot choose his own food, clothes, or place of residence, nor marry without his master's consent, yet all these things our workmen can do. Your true slave was liable to the caprice and whip of his master in every detail of life; the workman in England is liable to neither. All this talk, then, about "wage slaves," that one hears so frequently on the lips of Socialists, is exaggeration merely; it is not founded on fact.

Were Socialism to be introduced, it is almost certain,

I think, that our daily lives would be much more interfered with than they are at present.

As things are now, we have more variety and more freedom of choice in every way than we probably should have under Socialism. We can read what papers we like, choose the party or religion we wish to belong to, and exercise our own discretion in much detail of our lives, which we should probably not be allowed to do under Socialism.

The difference between our present life and what it would be, is about the same as that which now exists between civil and military life. Socialism would drill and brigade us into a kind of barrack-yard existence. Inspectors would meet us at every turn, examining into our private life, and exercising an intolerable official despotism. All the privacy of home, which Englishmen have hitherto so cherished, would depart, and life would be lived almost entirely in public, amidst disagreeable noise and vulgarity. All individuality of taste, of manner, of habit, and of dress would become lost, and we should in time become mere automata, moved by the all-absorbing and all-directing power of the State.

Again, it is most probable that were Socialism to be adopted and put into execution, a large minority of the people would be bitterly opposed to it. For such is the popular superstitious belief in the right of a mere majority, however small, to impose its own views on others, that I doubt whether a majority of only a dozen in the House of Commons would not be enough in the

eyes of ardent Socialists to justify the prompt carrying out of their desires.

But, after all, what is a majority? As a great writer says, "The momentary and temporary will of the *majority* is too often confused with the *will* of the *people*. What becomes of the vaunted freedom of *all*, however, when a large minority must continually hand over their will to representatives whose opinions they do not approve."* This exposes in a clear and simple manner the weak side of ruling by majorities, namely, the tyranny they may exercise. Where a majority of two-thirds of the representatives is necessary before a law can pass through Congress, as in America, the minority has much greater freedom from this tyranny; and where again, as in America, this two-thirds majority may be vetoed by the Senate, the High Court of Appeal, or by the President of the United States, the tyranny of the majority is reduced to a minimum.

But in England, where men are proposing to do away with a second chamber, and erect the House of Commons into a single chamber, with power to do whatsoever it may think proper, on the chance majority of a single vote, then we may say, indeed, with Sir Henry Maine, that we "are drifting towards a type of Government associated with terrible events."† We are in danger of having in our midst a government as arbitrary, as tyrannical, and as cruelly regardless of the feelings of

* Schoeffler, "The Impossibility of Socialism."

† Maine's "Popular Government."

the minority, as the French Convention was a hundred years ago.

Then, we may remember, a single chamber, called the Convention, was first tried in Europe; but with such terrible and despotic results, that at the end of two years its tyrannical abuse of power had become so great, that a second chamber had to be added to curb its extravagance, and a council of five to be added to that, to further check the goings-on of this precious Convention.

Moreover, it is not as if the chance temporary majority of a single chamber was always *right*. De Tocqueville, the great political author of a famous book on Democracy, says: "I hold it to be an impious and execrable maxim that a people has a right to do whatever it pleases."

And Dryden says the same thing in other words—

"Nor is the people's judgment always true,
The most may err as grossly as the few."

Even Rousseau, the Father of Socialism, confirms these views. "How shall an ignorant multitude," he asks, "who often know not what they choose, because they seldom know what is for their good, execute an enterprise so great and so difficult as that of legislation? The general will is always in the right, but the judgment which directs it is not always sufficiently informed. It should see things as they are, and should be enabled to *set the present and perceptible advantages of things against the distant and concealed evils that may attend them.*" *

* Rousseau, "Contrat Social."

Seeing then, as we cannot fail to do, the danger of a single chamber in the blundering, tyranny, and impulsiveness it would probably exercise, is it not a singular example of that common-sense the Englishmen pride themselves so much upon that we should require, in passing the most grave and momentous measures of state affecting the entire nation, a mere majority of 1 in 660, whilst we require in passing sentence on some miserable, insignificant criminal, affecting himself alone, the *unanimous opinion of all the thirteen jurymen sitting in judgment on him!*

And yet it would seem obvious to the shallowest intelligence, that "the more grave and important the deliberation is, the nearer ought the determination to approach unanimity."*

The inconsistency is too glaring and ridiculous to need further comment.

From the above it will, I think, become plain to all but the fanatical, that Socialists, believing, superstitiously as they do, in the divine right of majorities, might very likely so abuse the powers of legislation as to reduce mankind to a condition of slavery, far more distasteful to live under, than our present condition of so-called freedom.

The principle of Legislation may, like everything else, be used to excess, and thus become *abused*. It seems, indeed, in danger of being so abused in the near future; but sooner or later the people will gain experience, and

* Rousseau, "Contrat Social."

discover for themselves that excess of legislation is like excess of drink—most destructive to the happiness of those who give way to it. As Burke says—“It is better to cherish virtue and humanity by leaving much to free-will, than to attempt to make men mere machines of political benevolence. The world will, on the whole, gain by a liberty without which virtue cannot exist.”*

The cry for more legislation, that we hear on all sides of us now, is the natural reaction from the *laissez faire*, let-be principles of the old Liberals; but there is a point where legislation begins to stifle the free play of individuality, where it becomes grandmotherly and irksome; and when Socialists shall endeavour to interfere too much with the private individual life of the subject, then there will ensue as great a reaction against Socialism, as there is now against Individualism.

For, to quote John Stuart Mill, “Whatever crushes individuality is despotism. Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, that in order to break through that tyranny, people should be eccentric.”†

“Experience proves that the depositaries of power, who are mere delegates of the people—that is, of a majority—are quite as ready as any organs of oligarchy to assume arbitrary power and encroach unduly on the liberty of private life. The public collectively is abundantly ready to impose not only its generally narrow views

* Burke, “Reflections on French Revolution.”

† Mill, on “Liberty.”

of its interests, but its abstract opinions and even its tastes, as laws binding on individuals. Therefore there never was more necessity for surrounding individual independence of thought, speech, and conduct with most powerful defences; and all tendency on the part of public authorities to stretch their interference should be regarded with unremitting jealousy."*

And now, having at some length pointed out that the tyranny of a majority may easily become as great as that of a crowned despot, and that Socialism might soon reduce us to a condition of supervision, not unlike the ancient despotisms of Babylon, Assyria, and China, I will go on to consider the next question.

* Mill, "Political Economy," p. 566.

XII.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

“The most important principle Socialism will have to face is, that Society shall reproduce itself from the best stock and not from the poorest mentally and physically, as is so largely the case now.”—*Karl Pearson*.

WE have heard during recent years a good deal about what is called the “Survival of the Fittest”; and as you, “Nunquam,” and your Socialist friends, seem to challenge Darwin’s dictum on the subject, perhaps a few words of explanation may here be serviceable.

Darwin’s theory was this, that the whole world of human, animal, and vegetable life had reached its present comparatively high state of development, by the simple law of nature, which causes those animals or vegetables most suited to their environment, to survive at the expense of those not so well adapted; in short, by the simple law, that the weakest must go to the wall, or

“The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should keep, who have the power,
And they should take who can.”

"This law," Darwin says, "has been the chief agent in the work of improving and developing the species hitherto." Interfere with this law in the way that Radicals and Socialists propose, and at once degeneration will set in. The unfit will survive and multiply at the expense of the fit, and the race of men will slowly begin to deteriorate in quality.

Now this vital consequence of interfering with the law enunciated by Darwin, I notice you, "Nunquam," entirely shirk and ignore; and for the simple reason, that you are entirely unable to disprove its validity. You evidently see as clearly as Darwin did, that by legislating on behalf of the unfit and the poorly endowed members of society, and by propping them up in every possible way, you thereby must inevitably interfere with the law of the Survival of the Fittest, and therefore damage the future improvement of man's development. Every succeeding generation will, in fact, be inferior to the preceding one.

Now it is an acknowledged fact amongst the medical profession, that during recent years, all the improvements in sanitation and all the discoveries in medicine have, whilst relieving the ills of humanity, been at the same time the means of propping up and prolonging a very large number of lives that are sickly and degenerate, and which in former days would have been quickly removed, to the real benefit of themselves and the benefit of humanity at large.

I am not here arguing in favour of the doctrine of the

weakest to the wall, be it observed, but merely pointing out some of the undoubted consequences that ensue from interference with that doctrine.

At the same time, whilst pointing out the truth that underlies the principle of the survival of the fittest, I cannot avoid noticing some of your observations on it, "Nunquam," which seem to me very exaggerated and misleading. To say, as you do, for instance (p. 131), that "we are now living under a condition of society which gives to the lowest type of humanity the pre-eminence, and makes the basest the fittest to survive," is almost hysterical in its inaccuracy of statement. To say again, as you do on the next page, that "commercialism is just a war of wits, a gambling or fighting with weapons of parchment and the like, and really plunder by force of cunning instead of force of arms,"—to say this is to betray a bigoted one-sidedness that one rarely meets with in a responsible writer.

To assert boldly, as you do above, that only the basest of mankind and the most cunning succeed in life, is to assert that which is positively grotesque in its untruth, and a monstrous and outrageous libel on all the great and successful men of the day.

If your assertion is true, then all the great industrial heroes, so admiringly introduced to us by Mr. Smiles, are only a lot of base, cunning scoundrels, "fit," it may be, in quick wittedness, but in moral character amongst the lowest of mankind!

The fact of the matter is, that you see this question as

you see so many others, from an entirely biassed and one-sided point of view

What has been said about Competition may be here said about this doctrine of the "Survival of the Fittest"—namely, that it is neither good nor bad in itself, but is a principle that has to be studied and controlled. In this case the golden mean should be observed, as in all others. Where the principle is left free to develop as it likes, without check or control, we have a condition of social warfare, brutal in its cruelty towards those who fail; but on the other hand, where people try, as the Socialists would apparently do, to ignore the principle altogether, by rewarding the Fit and Unfit, Talent and Incapacity alike, then there would necessarily ensue a deterioration in mankind, that would plainly be most disastrous to the progress of the world. One may say, in illustration of this, that the gushing Socialist who cultivated the weeds (or the unfit) in his garden at the expense of the roses, would be just as big an idiot, as the *laissez faire* imbecile who allowed his garden to run wild, so that the roses might fight it out with the weeds, and the fittest might survive.

So long as human nature is what it is at present, we may then confidently assert that the doctrine of the "Survival of the Fittest" is, when duly modified and controlled by the State, a very salutary and bracing doctrine in the world of commerce and industry.

'To separate pain from wrong-doing,' says Herbert Spencer, "is to fight against the constitution of things,

and will be followed by far more pain. Misery is the normal result of misconduct, and the natural penalty for loose living." * And elsewhere he says—"There is need of further long continuance of social discipline, which, whilst it insists that each man shall have all the benefits his conduct naturally brings, insists equally that he shall not saddle on others the evils his conduct naturally brings, unless they freely undertake to bear them." † As J. S. Mill expresses it—"Every one has a right to live; but no one has a right to bring creatures into life for other people to support." ‡

And yet nowadays we hear on all sides of us people demanding that children should be fed and clothed at the expense of those who did not incur the responsibility of bringing them into existence!—a monstrous demand! For if this principle were carried out to its logical issue, the poor would increase and multiply at such a rate, that they would soon absorb the whole income of the country and level every one down to a subsistence wage.

If the incompetent, the foolish, the indolent, and the vicious were all to have their children's food and clothing guaranteed by the community, their numbers would increase alarmingly, and the survival of the unfittest would become realised with a vengeance.

And this "Survival of the Unfittest," it seems, Socialists are blindly eager to promote. Looking, in

* Spencer, "Man *versus* the State."

† Spencer, "Plea for Liberty."

‡ Mill, "Political Economy."

their often kind-hearted but short-sighted way, on the *immediate* results, they shut their eyes to the *ultimate* ones, and so too often would make the last state of things worse than the first.

Seeing then the evil results that ensue alike from letting either of these two principles—Survival of Fittest or Unfittest—have uncontrolled sway, our course lies unmistakably evenly between these two extremes.

Whilst controlling and alleviating the cruelty and hardships that a *laissez faire* doctrine brings in its train, by such means as Factory Acts, Poor Laws, Charitable Institutions, Old Age Pensions, etc., let us beware at the same time of undermining the self-reliance, strenuous effort, and perseverance of the people, by making life too easy and comfortable for them.

To do so would be to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. It would lead to the slow but sure deterioration of the human race.

XIII.

INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT.

“The tendency of middle-class speculation is towards the theory, that man himself is not responsible for his faults. They are to be imputed to circumstance. But he is responsible for, and, therefore, to be valued solely by his virtues. They are to be imputed to himself.”—*C. Kingsley*.

“I am inclined to agree with Francis Galton in believing that Education and Environment produce only a small effect on the mind of any one, and that most of our qualities are innate.”—*Darwin*.

SINCE the time when Watt first invented the steam engine, rather more than a hundred years ago, an age of mechanical invention has set in such as the world never knew before; but it should be observed that, with the beneficial cheapening of things which has resulted therefrom, there has necessarily been, at the same time, an accompanying subdivision of labour, which has not perhaps been equally advantageous.

Where a man in former days, before the flood of new machines came upon us, used to exercise his skill, ingenuity, and taste in making by hand the whole of an article, nowadays he probably only makes a small portion of that article, and, moreover, is compelled to make that portion by aid of a machine, which he has to

"mind," and feed, and dance attendance upon, like an obedient slave on some despotic Eastern potentate. Subdivision of labour has indeed been the cause of rendering labour much more monotonous, uninteresting, and irksome than it used to be. Whilst increasing the dull, lifeless, automatic drudgery of work, it has lessened the workman's active intelligent interest in it, and thereby stunted and dulled his mind.

Thomas Carlyle, writing forty years ago, rightly bewailed the effect of machinery on man, when he said that, "Now the Genius of Mechanism smothers him worse than any nightmare did, till the soul is nigh choked out of him, and only a kind of mechanical life remains."*

Allowing for the perfervid heat peculiar to Carlyle's language, his utterance here, though exaggerated, is not far from the mark. Machinery *has* much to answer for in deadening and brutalising the finer qualities of human nature. Give a man work, in which there is some variety of manual skill required, some room for the play of his fancy, imagination, or judgment, and you give him work which may be interesting and elevating, nay, even enjoyable; but put him to "mind" a machine for making screws, say, and you give him work which is nothing but monotonous drudgery, stifling to heart, mind, and soul.

Let it not be supposed, though, that machinery, and machinery alone, has been the cause of drudgery.

* Carlyle, "Sartor Resartus."

There are many kinds of labour, where machinery is not directly in use, which are equally, if not more toilsome and monotonous.

Whether it be hewing coal, carrying bricks up a ladder, stitching slop clothing, or any like employment, where the mind is not much needed, the result of such labour must be similar.

Can we wonder, then, that those whose occupation is of so dull and wearisome a kind, should by a natural rebound or reaction, thirst for relaxation of a stimulating and exciting character, and sometimes be carried away thereby beyond the bounds of prudence and sobriety? Can we wonder that some are driven by the dull, uninteresting nature of their work to drink, betting, improvidence, and consequent misery?

But whilst making all due allowance for a man's environment and occupation, which undoubtedly does exercise great influence on his life and character, I cannot at all agree with you, "Nunquam," in thinking man has no power of free-will to resist circumstances and overcome them.

Pressmen, Parsons, and Politicians, you say sneeringly, assert that the sufferings of the poor are due to their own vices, hereditary or acquired.

You, on the other hand, say this is the very reverse of the truth. The misery of the people, you assert, is *not* due to their idleness, improvidence, drunkenness, or vice, but to the sins, negligences, and ignorances of "those who rob them of their earnings and grow rich

upon their moral ruin and physical destruction." The Poor, in other words, are all Saints; the Rich all Sinners; and the vices of the poor are due to their surroundings, not their surroundings to their vices!

A very ingenious theory truly, which some may no doubt think entirely original, but which is really more than a century old, and was one of the chief causes of the bloody excesses and horrors that were committed during the great French Revolution.

And here a word or two about this theory.

Previous to the new doctrines taught by Rousseau about 1750, it was customary to regard "the heart of man as deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Man was, according to the fashionable interpretation of the Bible at that time, looked upon as a being born in "original sin," which came into the world when Adam was tempted and fell; and only by casting himself on the Saviour's redeeming mercy and forgiveness was it possible for him to obtain freedom from this inherent sinfulness of his nature.

But with the appearance of Jean Jacques Rousseau on the field of literature a new gospel began to spread amongst mankind. People were now taught by this new Gospel, according to Rousseau, that the doctrine of "original sin" was rubbish; that mankind were naturally free, equal, virtuous, and happy when living in a primitive state; and that their sin and misery was solely caused by the institution of private property, which gave birth to inequality and to the laws which

rich men made for their own advantage, to the detriment of the poor.

Such was the new evangel, or message, which Rousseau, the father of modern Socialism, came in the last century to deliver, and such was the doctrine which was so instrumental in bringing on the great Social Revolution in France of 1789.

Of course, this doctrine was nonsense; any one now can see that, after a moment's investigation. Man in his natural primitive state, we know now, from the numberless savage tribes we have studied, and from our knowledge of the doctrine of Evolution, was never free, equal, virtuous, and happy, as Rousseau imagined; but, on the contrary, was for the most part more debased, enslaved, and vicious in his primitive state than he is now. Rousseau, in short, made the common mistake of thinking the Golden Age was in the past, instead of it being in the future. The ideal world which he created by his imagination never existed. But though few nowadays, even amongst Socialists, believe any longer in a Golden Age in the past, there are still many who believe in the second half of Rousseau's creed, and think that the misery of the people is all owing to the rich and the laws that they have made in their own favour.

As this is a very great error, and one, if believed in, pregnant with the most dangerous consequences, I will now by a few plain arguments prove its absurdity.

First then I would ask, how is it that amongst the

poor there are such infinitely varying degrees of vice and virtue, misery and happiness?

You, "Nunquam," seem to think poverty synonymous with misery, and riches with happiness; but never was a greater mistake made. Such a mistake serves only to show how earthy and materialistic are your conceptions.

"Better is the poor, being sound and strong of constitution, than a rich man that is afflicted in his body."* So says the Scripture.

In the second place I would ask, how it is, if drink is caused by poverty, that so many amongst the middle and upper class drink, and so few amongst the miserably paid match- and shirt-makers, etc., give way to it?

In the third place I would ask, if environment and education make well-bred and well-taught children happy, good, and industrious—as you say—how is it that clergymen's sons are notoriously the most disorderly; and that so many young men with the best possible surroundings and education should in after-life go thoroughly and entirely to the bad?

Ah, "Nunquam," my cut-and-dried, rule-of-three, theoretical friend, with a plausible reason for everything, learn whilst there is yet time, that education and environment are *not* alone responsible for man's sins. *Men are not made all alike*, as you would have us believe; they are not all automatons to receive impressions from their surroundings, like so much wax of a like quality; but they are beings with Free Will, given to them by God,

* Ecclesiasticus.

with which to resist or give way to temptation, and on their exercise of that Free Will depends their happiness and welfare every bit as much as it does on Environment.

You, "Nunquam," say surroundings are everything in moulding a man's life and character. You are a fatalist; you ignore free-will and difference of character.

I, on the other hand, whilst acknowledging the powerful influence of surroundings, firmly believe that *innate* Character and Will are chiefly responsible for our happiness or misery.

And in this belief I am glad to say I have no less authorities than Darwin and Galton on my side, whose opinions on such a matter are at least likely to be as convincing as that of any Socialist I ever heard of. Darwin says:—

"I am inclined to believe with Galton, that Education and Environment produce only a small effect on the mind of any one, and that most of our qualities are innate."

Of course it is very flattering to the self-esteem of the gamblers, the thriftless, and the drunken to be told that it is their employers and not they themselves who are to blame. Men like you, "Nunquam," who preach such nonsense, are sure to become popular. But to thus shift the moral responsibility for our own sins on to the shoulders of environment, or of the rich, who are accused of causing that environment, is surely of all Socialist sophistries the most mean, cowardly, and dangerous. If

circumstances account for all things, then there is no crime, however bad, which is not excusable.

How different all this sickening cant and sophistry is compared with the noble-hearted repentance of the prophet Job when punished by God for his sin!

He does not whine in self-praise and glorification about his environment and circumstances, like your modern Socialist, but he simply says, in his deep contrition, "Behold, Lord! I am vile."

Your Socialist would say, on the other hand, "Behold, Lord, I am blameless, and good! Circumstances and rich men—*they* are the cause of my sin!"

Circumstances, circumstances! We hear too much nowadays of this flimsy excuse!

People do not impute their *virtues* to circumstances! Not a bit of it. They are only too ready to take the credit of those to themselves. Then why should they impute their vices to circumstances?

Again, that improvidence is due to the ignorance of the poor, as you say, "Nunquam," is simply not true.

Now that Post Office Savings Banks and Friendly Societies are at every street corner, and the duty of Thrift is preached from every pulpit in the land, the poor can no longer plead ignorance as an excuse for their improvidence. Do not they see the evils of it, moreover, on all sides of them, like a warning finger, pointing out to them what they must avoid?

Doubtless much of the misery and depravity of the poorer class of the community is due to the selfish slum

owner, the sweater, and the grasping employer; but it would be as one-sided and unjust, on the part of the poor, to ascribe all their vices to their environment and to the hard-hearted greed of the rich, as it would be for the rich to wash their hands of all responsibility, and assert that the poor are themselves alone to blame. Yet this one-sided injustice is here precisely what Socialists are proven guilty of. So bare-faced and brazen a piece of imposture, indeed, as I have here exposed, would make one smile, if it did not make one indignant.

From the above arguments, then, all reasonable people will see clearly that the misery and vices of the poor are partly caused by their surroundings or environment, partly by the neglect and selfishness of the rich, and partly and principally by their own want of character.

"The notion now so prevalent and so vociferously expressed, that all social suffering is removable, and that it is the duty of some one or other to remove it, is," as Herbert Spencer says, "essentially false. To separate pain from wrong-doing is to fight against the constitution of things, and will be only followed by far more pain. Misery is the normal result of misconduct and the natural penalty for loose-living."*

To expect that man should be made always happy and jolly by Act of Parliament, as some Socialists appear to do, is about as reasonable as to expect we could get rid by the same means of winter, bad

* Spencer, "*Man versus the State.*"

weather, sickness, old age, and even death itself! It is going against the nature of things!

Finally, in concluding this chapter, I cannot do better than quote the following passage from the writings of John Stuart Mill, which, coming as it does from a profound thinker with Socialist sympathies, seems to me to bear with quite special weight and authority on the subject before us:—

"Though our character is formed by circumstances," he says, "our own desires can do much to shape those circumstances; and what is really inspiriting and ennobling in the doctrine of Free Will is the conviction that we have real power over the formation of our own character."*

* J. S. Mill, "Autobiography."

XIV.

LUXURY.

“There is no riches above a sound body, and no joy above the joy of the heart.”—*Ecclesiasticus*.

LUXURY is a word which has many meanings.

The ordinary conception of the term is a mere material one, meaning wealth, costly raiment, rich living, sumptuous houses, fine wine, cigars, etc.; this is the Socialistic view of luxury.

But this is only the most plain and self-evident form of it; opinions as to wherein luxury exists are innumerable.

Lord Byron, for instance, thinks a good spell of sound sleep the prime luxury.

“A dreamless sleep after a day of toil
Is what we covet most.”

The sportsman finds his luxury in danger and hardship, in roughing it; the Turk in silence, smoke, and sensuality. The intellectual man, like Mr. Gladstone, prefers

“To scorn delight and live laborious days.”

But whatever a man may think luxury to consist in, there is no doubt that a happy constitution is the greatest

luxury of all. A natural, cheery disposition and a fine flow of spirits is far above riches; and this happy constitution is not the prerogative of the rich only, it is common to rich and poor alike; nay, I am inclined to think it is more often the poor man's than the rich man's possession.

Wealth of disposition is indeed, did people but *realise* it as they should, the greatest luxury in life. Was not Mark Tapley the richest man in "Martin Chuzzlewit," or Sam Weller in the "Pickwick Papers"? Assuredly he was.

Luxury as a word, then, would seem to be abused when it is used as it is now, to apply only to riches and what riches will bring; but as there appears to be some considerable misapprehension concerning this meaning of it, I will here try and help to roll the clouds of misunderstanding away.

Now, in the first place, let me at once dissipate one of the fallacies that capitalists are so fond of hugging to their souls and spreading abroad as though it were truth, namely, that Luxury finds employment for the working classes, and therefore benefits them.

Now, I am not fond of swearing, but I must here utter my most energetic protest against such a doctrine, and assert that a more damnable economic heresy than this was never yet invented. Were there, indeed, any truth at all in it, then the wastrel and the squanderer would be the greatest benefactors to mankind, which is obviously absurd.

But to prove this doctrine untrue we have only to take a common case in point, and follow it through to its results.

Let us take, for instance, the case of one of our many fair maidens who go into what is called "Society" in London.

Some people will assert that by giving orders for half-a-dozen evening dresses she gives employment to so many milliners, and so provides them with a livelihood which they would not otherwise get.

Now, so far as it goes, this is quite correct; but another side of the question is generally lost sight of, namely, that these dresses, employing so many milliners in the making, are all for the use of one person alone, and therefore that the expenditure on them is essentially selfish. Were the money to be spent in providing necessary clothes, sorely needed may be, for the poor relatives of these milliners, how much more *usefully* would their labour be employed!

But on this subject let me quote Ruskin. Addressing an imaginary young lady, he says:—"Do not confuse coquettishness with benevolence, nor cheat yourself into thinking that all the finery you wear is so much put into the hungry mouths of those beneath you; it is not so. . . . As long as there are cold and nakedness in the land around you, so long there can be no question at all but that splendour of dress is a crime. In due time, when we have nothing better to set people to work at, it may be right to let them make lace and cut jewels; but

as long as there are any who have no blankets to their beds and no rags for their bodies, so long it is blanket-making and tailoring we must set people to work at, not lace."*

Now, the above extract from Ruskin's writings puts the broad general truth of the matter very simply and plainly before us; but, like most truths of a broad and general kind, it requires some qualification.

For instance, in the first place, people who get into poverty, after being warned, through drinking habits, gambling, idleness, or gross improvidence, are not worthy of help. They have only themselves to blame. Therefore, it would only be encouraging their bad habits, if the above-mentioned young lady were to spend her money on them instead of herself.

In the second place, whilst denouncing her selfish luxury in spending so much on her own back and neglecting the backs of the poor, we should not forget that *nothing ever goes to waste*; and that the dresses she may wear perhaps only a few nights each, will most likely be worn with some slight alteration again by her ladies'-maid, and again after that by some one who buys them at the second-hand clothes shop, whither they will probably find their way sooner or later.

We see then from this, that the young lady does not consume, so to speak, the whole value of the dresses she wears, but only a part value. She in fact only takes the

* Ruskin's "Political Economy of Art."

cream off them, leaving the more solid wear and tear of the dress to those not so well off as herself.

And the same principle runs more or less throughout all forms of luxury.

The aldermen who gorge themselves on turtle and champagne may appear to Socialists like yourself, "Nunquam," monstrous, greedy, and heartless fellows, when so many poor girls are working long hours on bread and tea; but it should be remembered that the Lord Mayor's dinner only comes once a year, and moreover, that all the remains of the banquet are afterwards consumed on the premises by those who are in need of food. Nothing is wasted.

And yet, whilst thus pointing out some of the unseen ways in which luxury is in reality minimised, and rendered less wanton and extensive than at first sight it appears, let no one think that I am blind or indifferent to the cruel and heartless luxury that too frequently disgraces our civilisation. "The dangerous classes," said the late Lord Shaftesbury, "are not the people, but the rich who do no good with their money."*

And a great modern French writer—Leroy Beaulieu—says the same thing in other words: "The ridiculous busy idleness of our sportsmen and clubmen; the provoking luxury of our worldly entertainments; the outrageous display of elegant debauchery and hired vice—these are the lessons for the poor people in the streets!"†

* Life of Earl of Shaftesbury.

† Beaulieu's "Socialism and Papacy."

Yes, however much a man may wish to excuse the luxury of the rich, one cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that many of them seem to have forgotten altogether the Christian duty of giving to the poor, and the feudal duty of "noblesse oblige." Now, as in the days of the Psalmist and the Prophet Isaiah, there are, alas, far too many who "regard not the cry of the poor, but do even what they lust."

Such men as these, selfish and sensual, shutting up their bowels of compassion—these are the men who should be taxed, and taxed heavily. But though men such as these are far too numerous in society, they are not, happily, the majority. The rich, like the poor, may be divided into three classes—good, bad, and indifferent; and if some are bad and many indifferent, there are yet, thank God, many who are good, and give of their abundance freely and generously to their poorer neighbours. To lump then good, bad, and indifferent together alike, as Socialists do, is evidently a monstrous injustice.

Truly, if mankind were not so stupid, so materialistic, and so coarse, they would discover the truth of the saying, that "the happiness of a people consists not in the abundance of their riches, but in the fewness of their wants."

Man, however, in his present stage of development, is so animal and coarse of nature, that his one idea of luxury is to be able to satisfy every conceivable taste and desire; and such as he is now, he will no doubt continue to be for a long time to come. Nor would Socialism knock this

idea out of him. The love of luxury is too deeply engrained in the heart of man to be ever entirely eradicated.

But of recent years a certain change has come over the nation. Never have the rich sympathised with the poor so much as they do now, though some of the larger and more unreasonable strikes have, during the last few years, somewhat alienated their sympathy. Still there is no doubt that the feeling of the duty of wealth is rapidly increasing amongst the rich, and is likely to go on increasing. People are more keenly alive to the way in which their poorer neighbours live, and deny themselves luxuries accordingly, in order to be able to assist them out of their difficulties. The national conscience, after being long asleep, is now awake; and, year by year, we may therefore expect more "high thinking and low living"; more expenditure on others, less luxury at home.

Wealth does not want nationalising, it wants moralising, —Christianising. Rich people must, if they wish to save themselves from wholesale spoliation, learn in time, before it is too late, that property has its duties as well as its rights, and give of their superabundance generously, wisely, ungrudgingly, like real Christians, not in the mean, stinted, unchristian way too common hitherto. For a feeling is widely spreading abroad that the rich have got more than their fair share of the good things of life; and even the low motive of self-interest alone ought to induce them to give voluntarily with good

grace, lest a larger sum be wrested compulsorily from them.

If they cannot rise to the level of true Christianity, they can at least, one would think, exercise their worldly wisdom, and yield to Expediency what they would refuse to Justice.

But both rich and poor alike must realise that luxury does not necessarily consist in sumptuous houses, clothing, food, etc., but in something far less gross and material. Of what use are riches to the old, the sickly, or the vicious?—to those who cannot enjoy them?

True luxury may be found by the fine gentleman patiently tracking the deer in the cold snows of the Canadian forest, as much as in lounging down the gay promenade of the Burlington Arcade. True luxury lies in the spirit, character, and health of a man far more than in his surroundings. Socialists, therefore, whose only idea of luxury consists in sumptuous living, are mere materialists.

For what says the Scripture: "There is no riches above a sound body, and no joy above the joy of the heart."

XV.

PAID AGITATORS AND LABOUR REPRESENTATION.

“Those who hold out promises to the people of freedom from pain and trouble, and constant enjoyment, only cheat the people, and their lying promises will only make the evil worse than before.”—*The Pope's Encyclical on Labour*.

“The agitator who does not know how to wrap up a bad policy in fine language does not know the A B C of his business.”—*Balfour*.

“The Demagogue is the parasite of the people, corresponding to the parasites of kings. Each flatters his master, the one the people, the other the monarch.”—*Taine*.

“You will find, if you think deeply of it, that the chief of all the curses of this unhappy age is the universal gabble of its fools, and of the flocks that follow them, rendering the quiet voices of the wise men of all past time inaudible.”—*Ruskin*.

THE name of Agitator is no new one, as some folk suppose. It was first coined or invented in the days of Cromwell 250 years ago, and has been in use ever since. It is merely indeed another name for Demagogue “writ large.”

The agitator is generally a quick-witted, glib-tongued man, who, with a natural aptitude for politics, and for what is called the “gift of the gab,” emerges from the ranks of his fellow-workmen, and follows the more easy, more lucrative, and more exciting calling of stump-orator, or professional politician.

But in order to describe him accurately, I cannot do better than quote your own words, "Nunquam," on page 192 of "Merrie England."

"The agitator," you say, "is *not a nice man*. He disturbs the general calm; he shakes old and rotten institutions with a rude hand; he tramples on shams; he injures old-established reputations; he bawls out shameful truths from the housetop; he is fierce and noisy; uses strong language, and very often in his rage against wrong, or in the heat of his grief over unmerited suffering, *he mixes truth with error, and carries his righteous denunciation to the point of injustice.*"

I have italicised the last few words of the above quotation, because they are a practical confession from a newspaper agitator, that he and his brother agitators do mix up truth with falsehood in their statements, and hurl denunciations at the property-owning classes, which are not justifiable.

Of course I would not for a moment indulge in so sweeping an accusation, as Anarchists and Capitalists so generally make against Socialist agitators, of being all mere self-seekers. Some of them, I know, are actuated by an honest desire to better the lot of the poorer workmen; but even these—the very best of them—are, I am sorry to say, often unscrupulous in their language and methods, however noble their aims. They seem indeed, like the Jesuits of old, to have entered into a conspiracy or agreement to "do or say evil that good may come." And so we find them everywhere flattering the poor;

abusing the rich; promising all kinds of happiness and prosperity in the future; heaping abuse on past and present; indulging in the most extravagant self-praise; and finally habitually giving utterance to every *exaggeration* that they think may serve their cause.

As an example of this spirit of Exaggeration, so perilously akin to actual Lying, I give the following quotation from "Merrie England":—

"Neither Liberal nor Conservative understand in the least the interests or desires of the workers; and if they did, they would oppose them implacably." *

Now, when one remembers that the Factory Acts were brought into Parliament and passed mainly through the generous efforts of three factory owners—Messrs. Oastler, Sadler, and Fielden—one sees at once what mean, lying exaggeration, unjust as well as ungenerous, agitators will descend to.

"Nothing," says Carlyle, "is so sad or does so much harm as beautiful lies beautifully told." Balfour says much the same thing. "The agitator," he says, "who does not know how to wrap up a bad policy in fine language, does not know the A B C of his business."

And this spirit of exaggeration, which the demagogue indulges in when denouncing the rich, he also indulges in equally when making seductive promises of the future. "The deepest root of moral disorder," says John Morley, "lies in an immoderate expectation of happiness." † And

* "Merrie England," p. 198. † Morley, "Rousseau."

we see the consequences of this in the frightful, bloody Socialist insurrection that took place in Paris during 1848.

"The causes of this insurrection were shown by witnesses, during the Commission of Enquiry, to have been the extravagant and seducing doctrines taught by the Socialist leaders, which, by exciting hopes that could never be realised, necessarily led to discontent and a desire to subvert the existing government."*

Now, our agitators to-day are busy preaching the same extravagant and seducing doctrines, and we may consider ourselves lucky if bloodshed now, as before, is not sooner or later the result of it.

Promises are, as I have said already, easily made, but not so easily performed. It is easy for the agitator on a platform, haranguing a crowd of excited, enthusiastic, and ignorant men, to promise that Socialism will give plenty and even luxury to all; provide for the sick, the old, the widows, and children; reduce the hours of labour to four or even less per day; and "make the factory girl an educated lady, the collier a gentleman."†

It is easy enough to *promise* a millennium; but it is a very different matter to provide one. It is all very well to indulge in a boundless optimism, and say, "When once the public understands and desires to establish Socialism, there will be no difficulty about plans."‡ But

* Alison, "History of Europe."

† "Merrie England," p. 150. ‡ "Merrie England," p. 108.

before entering upon such an enormous revolution as Socialism implies, we want something more than boyish self-confidence and promises, which are apparently all the agitator has to offer.

For, as John Morley says, "In the sphere of Social Science and Economics, not to be scientific, not to be careful in tracing effects to their true causes, is to be without any security, that the causes with which we try to deal will lead, to the effects we desire."*

The people are, unfortunately, ready for any change of government that agitators assure them will promote their happiness, and looking only to the *immediate* beneficial consequences, entirely ignore the *ultimate* disastrous results, which will make their condition far worse than their former one.

As Burke says, "Very plausible schemes with very pleasing commencements have often shameful and lamentable conclusions."†

Besides, however much the workers may rely on their own leaders to solve the social problem for them, those leaders as well as themselves have not had the requisite time or training to qualify them for so complicated and difficult an undertaking.

"The wisdom of a learned man comes through opportunity of leisure; and he that hath little business shall become wise."‡

* Morley, "Rousseau."

† Burke's "Reflections on French Revolution."

‡ Ecclesiasticus.

It is not then to be expected that the agitator, who has been perhaps the best part of his life cotton-spinning or hewing coal, can have as good experience or training in the difficult art of statesmanship, as one who has been bred, born, and educated to it.

And yet it is a curious superstition in many English minds; that whereas the occupation, say, of gardening or farming requires a long apprenticeship and training, the much more difficult and serious occupation of making new laws for one's country needs no apprenticeship or training at all!

And so we see these agitators or amateur politicians rising up on all sides of us, and on the mere strength of their natural gift of oratory and making fair promises, carrying all before them with the unthinking crowd.

For it is an unquestionable fact that "the masses are not led so much by principle as by passion; not so much by reason as by *rhetoric*. They are a natural prey to those who uttering great swelling words of vanity, while they promise them liberty, are themselves the servants of corruption."*

It is indeed surprising what power an able platform speaker, like Tom Mann or Keir Hardie, for instance, has over his audience; not by reason of the sound argument of his matter, but from his gift of racy, vigorous language; his subtle flattery of those who listen to him; and his power of persuasive promises—in short, from his unusual mastery of the art of rhetoric or oratory.

* Lilly's "Shibboleths."

And yet I have heard Tom Mann make statements in his speeches of so exaggerated a character, that they were hardly to be distinguished from downright lies; lies unhappily swallowed whole by his undiscerning audience, who were too ignorant, or too timid to correct him.

On this subject of public speaking, Carlyle has some pregnant words to say. Writing of the "Stump-Orator," he denounces this "art of speech," as he calls it, as "a truly astonishing product of the time. The longer I consider it," he says, "the more astonishing and alarming does it become. I reckon it the saddest of all the *curses* now lying heavy upon us. Incontinence is half of all the sins of man. And among the many kinds of this base vice, I know none baser, or at present half so fell and fatal, as that same incontinence of tongue."*

And when to the flattery and promises employed by the agitator, Systematic *Abuse* of the rich and the present leaders of Society is added, the power of his rhetoric is vastly increased.

To call the House of Commons, for instance, as you do, "a place where vulgarity, aggression, rascality, and selfish presumption are the elements of success,"† appeals to the base, envious irreverence of the crowd, and is an immense success. The very boldness of the statement tickles their mental palate, and the scandalous calumny and outrage of it is overlooked. It is so

* Carlyle's "Latter-Day Pamphlets."

† "Merrie England," p. 91.

comforting to one's *self-conceit* to see great men trampled upon and brought down beneath one's own level.

Pleasant it is also to ignorant men to be assured that they will "soon know a great deal more than the average newspaper editor, who wastes pen, ink, and paper by perpetuating follies and lies."* Abuse of this kind is so delightfully easy and comforting to indulge in.

But this campaign of calumny and insult is mild compared with what follows. "Greedy, grasping, money-grubbing Gradgrinds; mean, selfish, dishonest thieves and robbers; idle, useless loafers and landgrabbers, whose bowels of compassion are dried up, and whose souls are shrunk by the fires of avarice,"—these are some of the amiable epithets which you and other agitators delight in applying indiscriminately to all owners of property. "There is none that is righteous; no, not one." All the greatest and noblest of the land, whom we have hitherto been taught to reverence and respect, men like Gladstone, Beaconsfield, Tennyson, etc., all come in for this abuse; for all are or were property owners.

And yet, whilst thus hurling every kind of sweeping abuse at owners of property, and so flattering the envy and self-righteousness of the wage-earners, you actually have the bare-faced effrontery to say on the last page of your book that you have "felt very bitter and angry in writing it, and more than once have thought of easing your heart with a few lines of irony and invective, but that in the name of Charity,

* "Merrie England," p. 91.

Mercy, and Humility you had no heart to censure other men !”

Surely we have here such a specimen of downright cant and hypocrisy as has rarely been equalled, not even by Mr. Pecksniff himself !

And mixed with this cant and hypocrisy one finds amongst agitators a self-confidence and self-glorification almost fanatical.

As an example of this I quote the following lines from “Merrie England” :—“There are,” you say, “two camps into which Society is now being divided. In which camp will you elect to stand? On the one side there are Individualism and Competition—leading to a great trade and great miseries. On the other side is justice, without which can come no good, from which can come no evil. On the one hand (the Socialist hand, of course) are ranged all the sages, saints, martyrs, noble manhood and pure womanhood of the world ; on the other hand are the tyrant, robber, manslayer, libertine, usurer, slave-driver, drunkard, and sweater.”

But this is not all. Not content with numbering yourself thus amongst the sages, saints, and martyrs, your self-righteousness and esteem leads you (p. 193) to the blasphemous irreverence of likening yourself to Jesus Christ himself, whom you debase and degrade in your usual fashion to the low level of a common agitator !

Now for a man thus to calmly assert that he is a saint and a martyr, much such another being as Jesus Christ, and that all who differ from him on socio-

political matters are tyrants, robbers, manslaughterers, etc., seems to me as big a piece of blatant bounce as ever I heard of. It is nothing less than self-conceit gone mad. The Pharisees of old are not in it.

Yet this spirit of self-glorification, this entire lack of natural modesty so peculiarly characteristic of the modern agitator, is but a subordinate feature in his composition.

His chief and leading occupation consists in fomenting disputes and organising strikes;—social warfare, indeed, is what he lives by; it is his chief justification for existence. His zeal and energy in the cause of labour are measured by the size and frequency of these industrial wars. Agitators, in fact, may be called the stormy petrels of the industrial world.

When one thinks of their wonderful activity, fire, and energy, one is reminded of the saying that, "The energy some agitators display in order to obtain the money which others have earned, would, if better directed, make themselves rich."*

And this brings me to another power the agitator avails himself of—namely, the power of bribery. Some people are innocent enough to think that bribery was abolished by the Corrupt Practices Bill passed some twenty years ago, but this is a fond delusion. Bribery is now as rampant as ever it was; its form alone has changed. Politicians no longer bribe at election time by pressing money in the palm of the elector's hand, but by promising to legislate away the property of one class

* Loftie.

and give it to another—a much simpler and more effectual plan.

You, “Nunquam,” may pretend to wax indignant about agitators being accused of “battening on the earnings of ignorant dupes;” but though this may be exaggeration, you know as well as I do that there is a certain amount of truth in it. However many harrowing pictures you may draw of poor weakly John Burns and others treating themselves to weak tea and toast after a “monster” meeting of an unusually exhausting character, everybody *knows*, yourself included, that agitating is much more profitable than hand-working. Editing such papers as the “Clarion,” too, cannot be so entirely unremunerative as you would have us believe. A journal which is sold for £10,000 would, I imagine, be able to afford its able editor something more tasty than tea and toast!

Agitating, we see then, is at any rate a much more lucrative occupation than working with one’s hands, and though the charge of “battening” is unjustified, there is reason for suspecting, men being such as they are, that the profit of agitating will in future continue in an ever-ascending ratio.

But when Socialists wax indignant at being accused of “pandering to the worst passions of the mob,” their indignation is then as palpably ridiculous as it is clearly assumed.

People have only to read “Merrie England” to find the accusation entirely and absolutely justified.

When men like yourself, "Nunquam," try and persuade the people that all wealth is solely the result of manual labour, and that mental labour is comparatively worthless; that the rich are mere robbers, and alone responsible for the drunkenness and improvidence of the poor; and that Thrift and Temperance would not benefit the people;—when a man gives utterance to such preposterous nonsense as this, then he is plainly and unmistakably "pandering to the worst passions of the mob," for he is inflaming their base feelings of hatred, self-conceit, and envy, which are generally quite sufficiently rooted in human nature already.

In concluding these remarks on agitators, I cannot do better than quote some admirable words of Ruskin's. Addressing the English workman, he writes as follows:—"Those that would say to you stand up for your rights—get your division of living—be sure you are as well off as others—don't let any one dictate to you; are you not all as good as everybody else?—let us all be free and alike,—those who speak thus to you, hate them as you do the devil, for they are his ambassadors."*

LABOUR REPRESENTATION.

The claim which Socialists and Radicals make for paying members of Parliament is based on the contention that, as things are at present, Labour is not properly represented in the House of Commons. But I will quote your own words, "Nunquam," as follows:—

* Ruskin, "Time and Tide."

“Neither of the Political Parties are of any use to the workers, because both the Political Parties are paid, officered, and led by Capitalists, whose interests are opposed to the interests of the workers. The Socialist laughs at the pretended friendship of Liberal and Tory leaders for the workers. These Party Politicians do not in the least understand what the rights, the interests, or the desires of the workers are; and if they did understand, they would oppose them implacably.”

Now, I think I have already, in the present chapter, disproved entirely the truth of the last assertion. If politicians oppose implacably the rights, interests, and desires of the workers, how is it then that politicians have hitherto taken the lead in passing all the great measures for ameliorating the condition of the wage-earners during the present century?

Did not Messrs. Oastler, Sadler, and Fielden, three generous-hearted manufacturers, and the Earl of Shaftesbury take the lead in passing the Factory Acts? Did not Cobden and Bright abolish the Corn Laws? Did not Disraeli pass the Reform Bill of 1867, giving for the first time the working man a vote? Has not, indeed, *all* legislation been passed and sanctioned by those whom you, “Nunquam,” please to call, in your sneering way, “Politicians”?

And yet, in face of these *facts*, forsooth, you Socialists actually have the singular effrontery and base ingratitude to assert that “neither of the political parties are of *any* use to the workers;” and that “even if they under-

stood their interests and desires, they would implacably oppose them."

Truly one may say with Burke, on reading such preposterous deviations from the truth, "The credulity of dupes is as inexhaustible as the invention of knaves." For I will never believe you are so grossly ignorant of history, "*Nunquam*," as to make such misstatements with any other purpose than that of trading on the ignorance and credulity of your readers. You must *know* that what you say is not true.

If, then, the payment of members would introduce into the House of Commons agitators like yourself,—men who have no regard for accuracy of statement; men who delight in exaggeration of every possible kind, men who live, move, and have their being in heaping every conceivable kind of discredit on the heads of those better off than themselves, and rousing the black devil of envy in the hearts of their hearers;—if payment of members would introduce men of this sort into the House of Commons, then dark indeed would be the day for England when the Bill was passed.

But though you profess, in your usual modest way, that you alone represent the interests and desires of the workers, I fear, friend "*Nunquam*," I cannot take you at your word. The great bulk of my countrymen, I hope and believe, are not such hot-headed Socialist "*hopefuls*" as you are; and therefore, were payment of members to take place, the House of Commons would not be inundated by such a spirit of wild, reckless destruction

and innovation as men of your type would introduce therein. Indeed, if we are to take America as our guide to the future, it is extremely doubtful whether many more workmen would sit in the House of Commons than do so at present.

For Mr. Bryce tells us in his great work on the "American Commonwealth" that in America "few workmen appear as candidates for election, and that the existence of paid members, therefore, in the great new continent, furnishes no argument for its introduction into a small country with a large leisured and wealthy class."* And the same may be said of France, Italy, and other countries where members of Parliament are paid; workmen are conspicuous in them chiefly by their absence.

But though, as we have seen above, payment of members by no means implies working-men monopolising seats in the House, it would seem to imply, judging from America and France, a vast deterioration in the manners, purity, honesty of the representatives of the people.

With the noise of the Panama scandal still ringing in our ears, it is not very reassuring for the advocates of paying members to read such reports as this from America: "In the State of New York there has lately been such a Witches' Sabbath of thieving, bribing, jobbing, and prostitution of legislative power to private interest as the world has never seen."*

* Bryce, "American Commonwealth."

Hearing then, as we do, so many unfavourable reports of the corruption, etc., which seems to everywhere reign where members are paid, it seems to me that all sensible Englishmen should pause before exchanging our present system and our parliamentary honesty for the American system and parliamentary dishonesty. All Americans acknowledge their system has failed; and it appears therefore nothing less than madness for us, in the face of this warning, to go and court failure also.

And now, having sufficiently discussed the subject of agitators and paid members, I will go on to the next question.

XVI.

CHRISTIANITY AND EQUALITY.

“Take heed of covetousness, for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesseth.”—*New Testament*.

“The more instructed we become, the more clearly we see the Inequality of mankind. Education is the most fatal of all discerners and enforcers of distinctions; it makes you think every day worse of yourself.”—*Ruskin*.

“Oh, Equality mongers ! learn, to your dismay, that even in a Shelter-kitchen or Wash-house there are first, second, and third classes, with the divisions as definitely marked, guarded, and maintained as in polite society.”—“*General*” *Booth*.

AFTER thus pointing out the exaggerated and misleading statements of Socialists in the previous chapters; after exposing the false premises and dogmas upon which they found their claims; after plainly proving that their aims are extravagant, their methods unscrupulous, and their arguments unsound, I will go on to discuss one or two minor questions vitally connected with the subject in hand, but which seem to me to be much misunderstood. The first of these is Christianity and its relation to Socialism.

Now, in the first place, let me confess that in drawing public attention to the *social side* of Christ’s teaching, the

Socialist Labour Party have done considerable service; but when, with characteristic ingenuity, they endeavour to make it appear that Christianity begins and ends in teaching equality of worldly goods, then they plainly misrepresent Christ's words in most flagrantly grotesque fashion. Christ, they say, came on earth to preach to mankind the doctrine of Equality and Fraternity; to inspire him with the grand idea of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man. He also came, they say, to denounce the rich and to praise the poor, and to found a new society based on Equality and Community of Possessions; and in confirmation of this they quote the following words of Scripture, which certainly do seem at first sight to substantiate the meaning Socialists put upon them:—"The Apostles had all things common. Not one of them said that aught of the things he possessed was his own. As any man had need, they sold their goods, so far as was necessary, and supplied his needs."*

Now, in the above words we have undoubtedly a clear and definite record of the Communal or Socialistic life lived by those earliest of all Christians—the Apostles.

But between this Socialism of the early Christians and the Socialism of this present nineteenth century there exists this one great and all-important point of difference—namely, that whilst the early Christians entered upon the communal life of equality and fraternity *voluntarily*, entirely of their own free-will and choice, the Socialists

* New Testament.

of to-day wish to force this same life on people *compulsorily*, against their own will, by the mere voting power of the majority! In other words, Christianity made the division of goods voluntary; Socialism would make it compulsory.

This, then, is one great vital difference between Christianity and Socialism, and it is indeed one of enormous significance; for it clearly proves, that before a man shared his possessions with his fellow-men, Christianity required that he should first share his heart with them also; that a great moral regeneration, in fact, should have first taken place within him, leading to the willing sacrifice of his material interests afterwards.

But this is not the only great difference between Christianity and Socialism. Another difference almost equally important exists—namely, that Christianity is Spiritual, whilst Socialism is Material.

“That which is known as the Socialism of the Gospel,” says a well-known writer, “far from resembling Socialism as we know it, is utterly opposed to it. Gospel Socialism springs from Abnegation, not from Cupidity; its leading principle is contempt of riches, not the greed of them. *It is the vow of poverty.*” *

The early Christian, indeed, was taught to despise equally comfort and luxury, and to make the moral and spiritual improvement of himself and his fellow-men his one end and aim.

The modern Socialist, on the other hand, is taught to

* Leroy Beaulieu, “Socialism and Papacy.”

seek after mere creature comfort, more of the good things of this life; improvement of his character morally or spiritually is more or less ignored.

"A man's life," says Christ, "consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesseth."

Karl Marx and you—his disciple—"Nunquam," seem to think that it is precisely in these very things that a man's life does consist! This is mere Materialism.

To call it by any other name is hypocrisy.

Another great and irreconcilable difference between Christianity and Socialism lies in their leading principles of action.

The former seeks to regenerate mankind, by first improving the individual character morally and spiritually; the latter tries to regenerate the people by improving first the material conditions and environment.

Christ says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and Righteousness; and all these other material things shall be added unto you."

The Socialist says, "Seek ye first comfort of surroundings, a living wage, and all these other things, moral character, etc., shall come in turn as a natural result."

Again, Christianity dwells particularly on the love of God and the hope of a future life.

Socialism, on the contrary, puts the Heavenly Father in a back seat; practically makes a deity of mankind; and either ignores or denies the hope of a heavenly future. This last, of course, with the subtle aim of

making men desire all the more desperately an earthly one.

Last, but not least, in the all-important question of Riches and Equality, Christ, it is true, denounces again and again the sin of avarice, of men heaping up riches in vain; but nowhere in any part of the Bible or Gospel do we read of Christ proposing that their money should be taken from them by the State, for the benefit of the community at large, either by taxation to extinction or any other method.

Jesus Christ would never have advocated so shameless and gigantic an act of injustice.

We see then, from the above statement of the case, the truth and accuracy of which is incontrovertible, that between Socialism and Christianity there are vital points of difference, distinguishing them clearly one from another.

Those then who are puzzled by well-meaning people calling themselves incongruously "Christian Socialists," have some excuse for their bewilderment; but if they examine the principles and conduct of men, who, like Charles Kingsley and Frederick Maurice, first called themselves by that title, they will find that they were nothing else than good, sound, generous-hearted Christians, devoting their lives to their fellow-men; and trying to bring about greater social equality voluntarily, by advocating in season and out the virtues of Co-operation, Profit-sharing, generous alms-giving, pure living, etc., and by denouncing selfish luxury. From anything like

the envy-stirring language and misrepresentation of Socialists they would have shrunk with horror, as from their drastic proposals for wholesale plunder. In any case of "nationalising" property, they would have insisted that at least *Fair* if not *Full* compensation should be given.

Between Christianity and Socialism then we see there is a vital difference; and those who try to make people believe they are one and the same thing, can only be either ignorant, or guilty of cant, hypocrisy, and misrepresentation.

And not only this, but those who, like the Socialists, preach the gospel of equality, and profess to found their levelling doctrines on Christ's words, are almost equally guilty.

Doubtless Christ taught man to love his neighbour as himself, and tried to impress him with the sense of human brotherhood; but nowhere that I can find did He ever make the mistake of trying to persuade mankind that men were in any real sense equal one with another. Jesus Christ was far too well versed in the laws of Nature to teach any doctrine so misleading as that. Self-sacrifice, Love, Humility, and Pity He taught; but Equality—never.

Nature, which created the eagle and the sparrow, the whale and the herring, the race-horse and the pony, the mastiff and the terrier, proves beyond all question, that infinite diversity and degrees of excellence are Nature's law; not Equality. And this holds good as much in human, as it does in animal nature.

Between the great statesmen, merchant princes, authors, artists, *savants*, generals, etc., and the depraved public-house loafer, there is as much difference almost as there is between a thorough-bred hunter and a low-bred jackass browsing on the common !

Between the *real* aristocracy of talent, noble-heartedness, and dignity, and the more ignoble amongst the democracy, there is as much difference as there is between a pure bred collie and a mongrel cur ! All the way down indeed, through the various ranks and gradations of society, there are infinite degrees of human excellence, from the highly cultured statesman expending his rare talents in the service of humanity, down to the very lowest pauper or criminal wasting his life in the service of vice, folly, and the devil.

Equality then, we see, is a thing unknown, equally in human as in animal nature.

It is a dream ; a possible "might-be" ; an ideal condition, evolved out of the imagination of social theorists like Sir Thomas More, Rousseau, Bellamy, etc. ; but it is a mere pious aspiration, not a reality.

The French Revolutionists, who drew up their famous "Rights of Man," began by asserting that men are born free and equal ; but they ended by developing in their midst the greatest tyranny and inequality the world has ever seen.

As Sir James Fitzstephen says, "Equality, after all, like Liberty, appears to me to be a big name for a small thing. Upon the whole, I think that what can truly be

said of equality is, that as a fact human beings are *not* equal; that in their dealings with each other they ought to recognise real inequalities when they exist, as much as substantial equality where it exists. That they are equally prone to exaggerate real distinction, which is pride; and to deny its existence, which is envy. Each of these exaggerations is a fault, the latter a peculiarly mean and cowardly one, the fault of the weak and discontented."

And I might add—the fault especially of the Socialist Labour Party!

But whilst thus showing how Socialists are flying in the face of Nature's laws when they deny man's inequality, and how they only betray in so doing the mean spirit of envy which possesses them, let no one think for a moment that I in any way acquiesce in the glaring inequality of wealth we see around us so painfully at the present day. Such a condition of society as that in which we live now, where selfish, vicious, and idle men often wallow in wanton luxury of every kind, whilst the honest, decent, and hard-working are frequently left almost to starve,—such a condition of society is unnatural, monstrous, and unjust; and steps should be promptly taken to remedy it if possible.

Great as the real inequality is between one man and another in character and capacity, the inequality in wealth is greater still, and very often out of all due proportion to respective merit. Though one man may be worth ten other men in capacity and virtue, it seems

hardly just that one man, say one of our wealthy bankers or merchants, should be worth ten thousand workmen in the amount of his possessions. The rich *do* seem to have more than their fair share of the country's wealth.

And this was evidently the view Christ took of the matter. For though He nowhere taught a hard, cast-iron, strict doctrine of equality, He undoubtedly abhorred the glaring injustice shown in *extremes* of poverty and riches. When Zaccheus the publican stood forth and said, "Behold, Lord! the *half* of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded any man, I will restore to him fourfold," Jesus was so well pleased with the man's generous spirit that he immediately replied, "This day salvation has come to your house," meaning thereby that Zaccheus, the master of it, and all his family, had, by their generous regard for the poor, thoroughly entered into the moral and spiritual atmosphere of Christianity.

We see here, then, striking evidence of the attitude Christ assumed towards the great question of equality. Zaccheus gave half only of his goods to the poor, and yet found favour in the sight of Jesus. And when our Lord told the rich young man to sell all he had and give it to the poor, it should be carefully noticed that he made this very important proviso, "*If thou wouldst be perfect,*" thereby clearly showing that He meant the renunciation of a man's entire property as a "counsel of perfection" merely, adapted only to the very few choice and exceptional men of highest moral character, not as a practical recommendation applicable to average humanity.

From these and other examples, therefore, we clearly see that Christ, had he lived in these nineteenth-century days, would never have subscribed to the system of *compulsory* equality proposed by Socialists. His views differed essentially from such a system. They were more in accord with the views of Edmund Burke, who said, "Men had all, certainly, equal rights; but not to equal things." Christ was, indeed, more practical than the Socialists, and instead of laying down dogmatic, *à priori*, abstract, impossible rules of life, only suitable for equal and perfected humanity, He recognised the various degrees of excellence in men, and treated each individual on his own merits, as shown in those pregnant and remarkable words, "He who is able to receive it (namely, his advice) let him receive it." Our great Teacher, in fact, desired only an approximate and voluntary equality, not a strict and compulsory one—*an equality in the spirit, not in the letter.*

Whilst, then, we should each one of us endeavour to share our superfluities as much as possible with our poorer neighbour, and so do away with the more glaring inequalities in the position of our fellow-men, we should at the same time, once for all, renounce as a mere empty, unpractical dream all Socialist schemes and proposals of making every one equal and alike.

Equality of opportunity is one of the things Socialists to-day are loudly calling out for; and yet, were they to get their wish, people would soon be as unequal as they were before. Boys in the same class or standard at

school all have an equal opportunity, as much as it is possible to give them, and yet at the end of a year they have generally entirely changed their relative positions. And so it would be in daily life. Shake a basket of apples, says the old proverb, and the biggest always come to the top. And painful as it must be to Socialist theorists like yourself, "Nunquam," that which is true of apples is equally true of men.

Equality, then, we find is but a dream, a counsel of perfection, a thing which nowhere exists in nature; something which we should indeed strive to see more nearly realised amongst men than it is at present, but which can only, if ever, be realised by long process of time.

As William Godwin says, "The equality for which we are pleading is an equality that would succeed to a state of great intellectual improvement. So bold a revolution cannot take place in human affairs till the general mind has been highly cultivated. Hasty and undigested tumults may take place under the idea of an equalisation of property, but it is only a calm and clear conviction of justice to be mutually rendered and received, of happiness to be produced by the desertion of our most rooted habits, that can introduce a system of this sort. Attempts without this preparation will be productive only of confusion. Their effects will be but momentary, and a new and more barbarous inequality will succeed."*

* Godwin, "Political Justice."

XVII.

THE UNEMPLOYED, THE POOR, AND FREE TRADE.

"A man willing to work, and unable to find work, is perhaps the saddest sight that Fortune's inequality exhibits under the sun. There is not a horse willing to work but can get food and shelter in requital."—*Carlyle*.

"Revolutions in machinery are a constant cause of unemployed."—*Schoeffle*.

"It is a painful task to oppose any well-meaning proposals for ameliorating the condition of the poor; but we must be cautious, lest in the desire to be generous we are tempted to encourage impracticable remedies, and to excite in the minds of the people expectations which can only be realised by their own strenuous and independent exertions."—*Brassey*.

AMONGST the many "burning questions" of the day there is none so important in the eye of the Socialist as that of the unemployed. Christ, indeed, said, "The poor ye *have* (not will have) with you always;" and again, in one of the parables, he shows that there were not only poor in his times, as there are now, but also unemployed. "Why stand ye all day in the market-place idle?" asks the landlord's steward of the men, and the answer is, "Because no man has hired us."*

* Gospel.

But though men out of work have no doubt been common enough in all ages of the world, their numbers seem to have increased so seriously during recent years, and their pitiable condition seems to have so forced itself on the public conscience, that nowadays cries are heard on all sides peremptorily demanding, not only the prompt abolition of poverty, but also that immediate steps should be taken to provide work for the unemployed.

Now, of course every man with any Christian feeling of pity about him must sympathise deeply with those who, through no fault of their own, suddenly find that they have "got no work to do."

Thomas Carlyle says—"A man willing to work, and unable to find work, is perhaps the saddest sight that Fortune's inequality exhibits under the sun. There is not a horse willing to work but can get food and shelter in requital."

And the worst of it is, there has sprung up a tendency of recent years amongst employers, to turn adrift men of forty or fifty years of age, fathers of families, who need employment most, and supplant them by younger, more efficient, and cheaper men.

Now the actual number of the unemployed is almost impossible to ascertain correctly. The rough estimates which you, "Nunquam," and Keir Hardie make, of there being a million, are, from your well-known habit of exaggeration, more sensational than accurate. But even were there only half the number you name, surely

500,000 men out of work, or about 1 out of every 16, tells a quite sufficiently sad story of want, misery, and wretchedness. It any way shows, I think, plainly enough, that during recent years the numbers of the unemployed have certainly been increasing, and that they are now beginning to assume altogether alarming proportions.

Now the causes of this unfortunate condition of affairs are not far to seek, and are almost too well known for me to recapitulate; but in case there may be some amongst my readers who are uninstructed in this matter, or on the wrong scent, I will here enumerate them seriatim.

First, then, comes the constant, never-ending invention of labour-saving machines, which, beginning a hundred years or more ago, has been going on ever since with ever-increasing intensity, supplanting manual labour, and so everlastingly driving out batch after batch of workmen to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

Herein we see forcibly illustrated the evil side of the results of machinery.

The second great cause of want of work is the increasing alternation of good and bad trade, of "booms" and "gluts" in the market, which are principally due to the growing evil desire and facility for speculation. This most obnoxious feature of our modern industrial system occasions nearly all the unnatural see-saw of alternate over-work and under-work, which is so especially demoralising to workmen; and it is perhaps as potent a creator of misery as any other.

The third great cause of want of employment is the action of some of the more fanatical and ignorant amongst the Strike Organisers and Labour Leaders, in insisting upon more wage than the demand for goods justifies the employer in giving, thus dislocating trade and driving it out of the country. Manufacturing, as we do to such a large extent for our colonial cousins and foreigners, we are compelled to compete with cheap foreign labour; and when our workmen's demands for higher wages cut down the employers' profits to vanishing point, he is obliged to close his mill or workshop, his men are thrown out of employment, and the goods are made abroad. As Professor Marshall aptly puts it, "When trade combinations, customs, or restrictions fortify themselves irresistibly in any town or country, the wave of progress simply leaves that town or country."

And that is precisely what is happening now, as it has often happened before in the history of commercial nations. Unfortunately, some of our modern Labour leaders (or misleaders, rather) are either grossly ignorant of history, or do not wish to listen to its warning voice. It does not always suit their own personal interests as agitators to do so.

Yet it is indeed an absolute and incontrovertible *fact* that, ever since the great Dock Strike of 1889, and the advent of what is called the New Unionism, the normal increase in our foreign trade has fallen off considerably, whilst the foreign trade of some of our competitors has been steadily increasing.

But in addition to these three leading causes of men being thrown out of employment, there are one or two minor causes, such as quick changes of fashion, overgrowth of population, and superiority of foreign manufactures, which are all more or less influential in the matter. For years and years we in England, wisely or *unwisely*, have been supplying our foreign competitors with machinery at the rate of £10,000,000 worth per year, with the unhappy result that, whereas we formerly had almost a monopoly of the foreign trade, and used to make a large quantity of goods for other countries, we are beginning to find that foreigners now make their own goods; the demand by foreigners for our goods is on the decline; and our workmen, in consequence, are more and more thrown out of employment.

And now, having traced thus far the unemployed question to its causes, let us see what might be done to remove the evil.

The usual, well-known remedies proposed by Socialists are, of course, municipal workshops; and provided these were properly managed, they might no doubt do much to find work for those seeking it. But in entering upon any such novel and far-reaching scheme as this, the greatest care would have to be taken, first, that the wages paid in these workshops should always be considerably lower than those paid by the regular outside trade, otherwise very soon the numbers coming to work in them would swell to alarming proportions; and, secondly, that the goods made in them should not com-

pete with goods made in the open market ; or else the men working for companies and private firms would soon be thrown out of work, and consequently come in to swell the numbers of those already working in the municipal workshops. Were these two points indeed not very strictly observed, it might come to pass, in course of time, that private enterprise would entirely succumb to the cheaper labour of the communal workshops, and that workmen would gradually all be in the inferior pay and employment of the municipality. Thus the remedy, we see, would be worse than the disease, and a monstrous injustice would have been committed, in thus bringing the superior men in regular work down to the level of the inferior men of the unemployed class, who had found a kind of pauperised, State-aided occupation in the municipal workshops.

From this then we see how true it is what Burke says, that "Very plausible schemes, with very pleasing commencements, have often shameful and lamentable conclusions." It is indeed absolutely necessary that, when introducing any new remedy for this evil of the unemployed, we should look carefully not only into the *immediate*, but also into the *ultimate results*. This is what Socialists neglect to do. And another of these *ultimate results* that would ensue, if the State once began to promise work and a living wage for all, would be a most alarming and regrettable increase of the population. Once let the State, through its municipalities, make promises of such a kind as this, and men would no

longer be deterred from marrying young, or getting as many children as possible. The old-world maxim, with which the pious propagating parent used to console himself, that "The Lord will provide," would, under the new order of things, soon be changed into "The State will provide"; and men would soon lose all the self-restraint and self-reliance of character they have these long years been slowly and steadily building up; the country, already far too thickly populated, would shortly be overrun with increasing hordes of pauperised humanity; and the great English nation, once famous for her store of intelligence, refinement, and riches, would ere long find these things dissipated, sunk, and swallowed up in the mad endeavour to support an ever-increasing crowd of degenerating humanity.

Doubtless, Socialists, on reading this, may say—Bosh! and pooh, pooh these dark prophecies of mine; but they cannot get over the *fact* that, when the price of corn was reduced by the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and the wages of workpeople rose at the same time, an extraordinary increase of population was the only practical result, almost entirely preventing the great permanent improvement in the condition of the people that was anticipated. Cheaper food, and higher wages, it was found, meant only larger families.

And so, surely, much the same result would occur if the State was to guarantee work and comfort for all. The thing is as plain as a pikestaff. One thing, and one thing only, could prevent it, and that would be State

control of marriage, and of the number of children allowed to a family. This must, as a matter of course, inevitably accompany any action the State might take in guaranteeing work to all; and this is, I venture to think, a new departure of so arbitrary and unpopular a character, that even the most thorough-paced Socialist would pause before proposing such a measure, however certain he may be in his mind of its necessity.

And what I have here above said, applies equally to the poor. To again quote John Stuart Mill:—"Every one has a right to live, but no one has a right to bring creatures into life to be supported by other people."* And yet we see "a vicious tendency about on the part of a large number of the poorer class to get children, and demand that they should be fed at the expense of those who did not incur the responsibility of bringing them into existence—a monstrous demand."†

And it is their incapacity to see the ultimate results of pampering poverty which makes Socialists call other parties callous and indifferent to the poor. But this is most unjust. The true reason why the Tory and Liberal parties are averse to promising work and comfort for all, is, because they see clearly the disastrous pauperisation of the masses that it would eventually result in.

"Often as poverty may be undeserved, poverty is very often the natural and just punishment for faults, follies, or incapacity. If fools, loafers, spendthrifts,

* J. S. Mill, "Principles of Political Economy."

† Levy, "Outcome of Individualism."

criminals were all to be made comfortable, their numbers would increase alarmingly."* In dealing then with the poor it is essential that, whilst avoiding all that is harsh, we should avoid at the same time affording them such a comfortable standard of living as might induce working-people to seek a living at the cost of the rates, rather than at the cost of their own individual exertions. Without such precautions the nation would soon become pauperised, and the poor rates in time would absorb all the wealth of the country. This I have already shown.

Keeping these precautions well in view then, the immediate practical problem before us which presses for solution is, What shall we do with our unemployed and our poor? Well, with our unemployed I would deal in many ways. Some I would emigrate with money advanced by the State, and put on the land in the Colonies, where they could be self-supporting in village communities. For in spite of all that Socialists say against emigration, there is no doubt at all amongst thinking men, that England is far too thickly populated. The difficulty of getting rid of our town sewerage is Nature's clearest admonition that such is the case, and a comparison of the relative density of population in different counties confirms the truth of Nature's warning; for whereas it appears England has no less than 484 people to every square mile, other countries have as follows :—

* Graham, "Socialism Old and New."

France ...	187	America ...	21
Germany ...	221	New Zealand ...	5
Russia ...	45	Canada ...	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Austria ...	160		

But State-aided emigration is only one source of relief. Municipal workshops might be *tried*, experimentally, in the great centres of industry; and many of those out of work might be once more set to labour on the land, if a small protective tax of 5s. to 8s. per quarter was once again put on foreign wheat. This would resuscitate our waning agriculture; turn pasture-land into wheat-fields; employ large numbers of those now out of work; and prevent our dangerous dependence on foreigners for food.

Free Trade devotees would howl, no doubt, at the prospect of the loaf being made dearer; but the additional cost of the loaf would be really trifling, compared with the enormous advantages we should reap in other ways, and the enormous cost we might be put to in preserving our food supply during a possible war.

The devotees who so superstitiously worship the fetich of one-sided Free Trade are gradually being found out to be the unpractical theorists they are; and soon a return to a system of moderate Protection will be inevitable.

Having thus in these three different ways made arrangements for absorbing the ranks of the Unemployed, I would deal with the Poor in a similar large and liberal manner, separating more strictly than at present the clean from the unclean; the

sheep from the goats; the good from the evil; removing the young from contamination as much as possible; making the able-bodied employ themselves in *useful* labour of some sort, and helping the old with State-aided pensions.

And so by dint of patient sustained struggling with difficulties in a practical manner, I would in course of time reduce the number of unemployed and poor to a minimum, and so remove from our midst the two greatest sores in our social system, which have been too long allowed to remain festering.

At the same time, whilst thus endeavouring to set the poor on their legs through the aid of the State, the poor must be made to understand that their own individual efforts to improve themselves are essentially necessary also.

"One of the fundamental errors pervading the thinking men of all parties," says Herbert Spencer, "is, that evils admit of immediate and radical remedies. Nothing, however, but the slow modification of human nature, by the discipline of social life, can produce permanently advantageous changes!" In common parlance, men can't be made prosperous, sober, or thrifty by Act of Parliament. Self-help still is, and will remain, in spite of all that Socialists may say, the chief means in the hands of the poor for bettering their condition. It is by giving up their habits of improvidence, drinking, gambling, etc., that they will most surely and lastingly benefit.

You, "Nunquam," and other Socialists, assert that "the poor would not cease to be poor if they all became sober, thrifty, and industrious;" you even go so far as to say "they would not gain thereby any advantage, but only a lower state of serfdom and a harder task of slavery; they would in fact become only poorer than they are now." *

So bold and audacious a statement as this would fairly take the breath away, did one not already know that you are nothing if not startling. With an annual national consumption of drink amounting to £160,000,000, costing every head of a family on the average about £15 per year, it is difficult to believe you are serious in thus making so surprising an assertion. But after the first feeling of astonishment and indignation has passed, one plainly sees your object in thus giving utterance to such wicked nonsense. It is in order to flatter the vices of the lower strata of society; to gain thereby their votes; prevent them improving their position under the present organisation of society, drive them thereby to despair, and, lastly, to a desperate endeavour to bring about the introduction of Socialism by fair means or foul.

But what a seared conscience a man must have before descending to such low means as this to promote his ends! With the Socialist, however, the motto is: "Do or say evil that good may come;" and therefore one must not be surprised, but surely baser means of bribery was never yet employed before by any political partisan.

* "Merrie England," pp. 161, 151.

To calmly and dogmatically assure the drunken, improvident, gambling, and vicious, that they would only be poorer and worse off by giving up their vices, is, as a well-known writer has said, "teaching of an unspeakably pernicious kind; a deadly and virulent social poison." It strikes at the root of all effort after self-improvement, and creates in the minds of the poor, sunken people a self-righteousness and a fatalistic acquiescence in their evil habits indescribably demoralising and dangerous. And when, in addition to this, they are assured that their poverty and evil habits are not their own fault, but the fault of their surroundings and their hard-hearted taskmasters—the rich who plunder them—then indeed the danger of demoralisation is increased ten-fold, and the poor ignorant dupes, who swallow these lies unquestioningly, become lashed up to the proper Socialist pitch of envy, and ready for the most desperate acts of vengeance and innovation.

But such palpably false and one-sided teaching as this, I am persuaded, will not receive acceptance by any except a few of the most ignorant and depraved. It is, indeed, an insult to the intelligence of your countrymen, "Nunquam," to expect them to believe such rank balderdash.

And even if you were not self-interested in your depreciation of thrift, you would be very childish and silly, for, as Marshall says: "The distaste Socialists exhibit for thrift and saving can only be likened to the childish inability of half-civilised nations to realise a

distant advantage ; the Future is eclipsed in the Present : Niggers and North American Indians are examples of those who will only work for immediate reward." *

Once again, then, let me nail this lie to the counter, that drunkenness, improvidence, gambling, betting, vice, idleness, are *solely* due to a man's surroundings, and to the cruel robbery of rich people. Socialists will be making the rich responsible for sun-spots, fogs, and railway accidents next !

Doubtless, surroundings and the rich are in *some measure* to blame ; but it is exaggeration carried to the point of a lie and a libel to try and make them appear *solely* responsible.

Those who are *chiefly* responsible for their faults are the poor themselves ; and it is on the exercise of their own free will, by their own efforts after self-reformation, that they must *chiefly* depend for an improvement in the condition of their lives.

* Marshall's " Industrial Economics."

XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles (wine skins), else the bottles burst, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles perish."—*New Testament.*

"Great hopes have lean offspring."—*George Meredith.*

"It must be acknowledged that those who would play the game of revolution on the strength of their own private opinion, *unconfirmed as yet by any experimental verification*—who would forcibly deprive all who have now a comfortable physical existence of their only means of preserving it, and would brave the frightful bloodshed and misery that would ensue if the attempt were resisted, must have a serene confidence in their own wisdom on the one hand, and a recklessness of other people's sufferings on the other, which Robespierre and St. Just, hitherto the typical instances of those united attributes, scarcely came up to."—*John Stuart Mill.*

AND now, "Nunquam," having thus exposed the many fallacies in "Merrie England," and shown the other side of the question, it remains only for me to briefly sum up the case for and against Socialism, and leave my readers to give a fair, just, and impartial verdict.

Those who have followed me thus far must have seen, that however praiseworthy your aims for bettering the lot of the toiler's way may be, your methods and means for

attaining those aims are certainly both unscrupulous and unjustifiable.

Like the Jesuits of old, your principle seems to be that the end justifies the means, that it is right to do or *say* evil in order that good may come.

With this dangerous principle well in view (which would justify two shipwrecked starving sailors eating the third), you have so misrepresented and exaggerated things, that many of your statements are perilously near lying; others actual lies themselves. With your one-sided, prejudiced view of society, you have in fact drawn a picture of it which is entirely out of perspective. Like your master, Robespierre, you and your fellow-agitators are indeed nothing else than *Political Fanatics*.

One may say almost that what the Salvation Army is to Religion, Socialism is to Politics. Socialists are, indeed, a kind of Political Salvationists or Ranters. In the abstract, *à priori* dogmas which you lay down, the poor are all saints, the rich all sinners; and amongst the latter there would even seem, in your eyes, to be "none that is righteous, no not one!"

How utterly mechanical and untrue all such conceptions of society are, I have already quite sufficiently pointed out. Moreover, to read your book, one would suppose that Socialists were the only people in the world who really were virtuous and unselfish, or who really had any regard at all for the poor! All other people were corrupt and vile!

The self-confidence, too, which you show in your

ability to carry out the Socialist programme is as comic as it is childish.

You confess (p. 104) that you "approach the question of carrying out your views with great reluctance, as you have given little attention to the *practical* work of establishing and organising a Socialist State;" but with a boyish candour, delightfully refreshing, you gravely assure us "*you will do your best!*"*

In so saying, you remind me of the young man already quoted by you in "Merrie England," who had never played the fiddle, but had no doubt he could if he tried.

But surely something more than this boyish self-confidence is requisite in men who propose to overturn the whole established order of things accepted by the united consent of Europe for centuries, and to set up an entirely new and untried order of society. That which a well-known writer calls a "light-hearted confidence in the solution of unconsidered difficulties" is hardly the kind of mental equipment necessary for constructive statesmanship, and yet this seems to be all that Socialists possess. It is easy to *destroy* and *pull down*; a child can do that, and generally *does*; but to *build* and *construct* is a much more difficult process.

It is easy also to promise all kinds of prosperity and happiness with the introduction of Socialism. And yet what do all the greatest thinkers of the world tell us? Why simply this—that Socialism is an Unpractical Dream. Moreover, every sensible man must see, that

* The italics are mine.

of all the countries of the universe, *England is, by reason of her great, mammoth Foreign Trade, the very last country suitable for trying the Socialist experiment.*

Rich, self-supporting countries like America and France might possibly try it without so disastrously dislocating their trade and prosperity; but in the case of England, dependent to such an immense extent as she is on other countries for both food and employment, experiments in Socialism would bring about most disastrous consequences. They would, as I have already clearly shown, interfere with our foreign trade; throw thereby large numbers of workers out of employment; and so cause far more misery than they cured.

Not only then would it be insane on England's part to experimentalise in Socialism, but it would be equally insane to expect to succeed in making people equal all at once by a mere Socialist Act of Parliament. "The State is," as Herbert Spencer says, "an organism, and not an artificial structure, to be pulled to pieces and put together on a new model whenever it pleases the effective majority to do so, and this the most impatient reformers now recognise."*

At the very time when we in England have become perhaps more unequal in mind, manners, morals, and moneyed wealth than ever we were before, it is quite natural that a cry should go up amongst the poor for greater equality of conditions; but it is wholly ridiculous to think that this inequality, which is the organic growth

* Spencer, "Plea for Liberty."

of centuries, can be done away with by a simple Act of Parliament. To aim at conditions of greater equality is right and practicable; but to aim at anything like a strict equality is madness, and the sooner foolish and ignorant people make up their minds to this the better.

On this subject of decreeing Socialism and Equality by law, John Ruskin, a great writer, whom Socialists are fond of quoting, has some very pregnant remarks to make, which are, I think, worth quoting. Addressing some workmen:—"You need not think," he says, "that because you obtained a majority in Parliament, you could immediately compel any system of business broadly different from that now established by custom. If you could pass laws wholly favourable to yourselves, as you might think, because wholly unfavourable to your masters, the only result would be that the riches of the country would leave it, and you would perish in riot and famine. Be assured that no great change for the better can take place easily or quickly, nor by impulsive or ill regulated effort, nor by bad men, nor even by good men, without much suffering."*

And this suffering we are now in England just beginning to experience, thanks to the Socialist action of the New Unionism so-called. If men will organise a system of strikes and demand wages which the employers cannot afford to give, they must expect to see our foreign trade leave us, and the ranks of the unemployed thereby grow larger and larger.

* Ruskin, "Time and Tide," p. 19.

*The great danger of the present day is, lest our workmen should act hastily, and allow themselves to be carried too far by the persuasive oratory of their leaders in the reaction from Individualism to Socialism; from the false doctrine of self-help, *laissez faire*, every man for himself, and devil take the hindmost, to the equally false doctrine of State-help, every man for his neighbour, and devil take the foremost!*

"A taste for variety is one of the characteristic passions of a democracy;" and if our workmen make the egregious mistake of thinking that the self-help of the individual should be *supplanted*, not *supplemented*, by the State-help of Socialism, very great dangers to the progress of civilisation might ensue. To supplement self-help by State aid is right; but to supplant it would be ruinous.

For, to once more quote Ruskin, "It is absolutely undeniable that all effectual advancement towards true felicity must be by individual effort. Certain general measures may aid, certain revised laws may guide such advancement; but the measure and law which have first to be determined are those of a man's own home."*

And this opinion of Ruskin's is confirmed by that of the great leader of Corn-law Repeal, Mr. Cobden. Speaking at Birmingham many years ago (1847), he said, "I wish to see the great masses of the workmen of this country raise themselves by increased temperance, frugality, and economy; and I tell you candidly that no people were ever yet elevated save through their own

* Ruskin, "Unto this Last," p. 169.

advancing wealth, morality, and intelligence; and any one who tells the working man of this country that they may be raised in the social scale by any other process than that of reformation in themselves, is interested either in flattering or deceiving them."

These are hard words no doubt; and I should prefer to think some Socialists flatter and deceive from ignorance rather than from self-interest; but in any case these words of Cobden's came as a wholesome corrective to much of the windy Socialist rant and expectation of the day. So long as the world lasts, self-help will undoubtedly be the mainspring of all human happiness, and it is idle for Socialists to think otherwise. When men shall have cast away the alloy of selfishness, and put on the nature of saints, *then* we may perchance see something like the Socialist dream realised. But mankind are not saints yet, nor are they likely to become such for many long years. At present one may certainly say with Herbert Spencer, that "Man is not by nature Socialistic. He, as a matter of fact, will long continue to love himself better than his neighbours, and to seek in the first place his own advantage."*

We see then, from the foregoing arguments, that to apply any kind of strict Socialism to present-day life would be utterly impracticable and disastrous. It would be like putting new wine into old leather bottles. The social fabric, like the bottles, would burst!

All cut-and-dried dogmatic systems of Socialism, such

* Spencer's "Plea for Liberty."

as Fabians, and Social Democrats, and the Labour Party would introduce to-morrow if they had the power, would most assuredly only bring upon us the most frightful state of anarchy and confusion; and simply for this reason—namely, that human nature and human institutions are not ripe for such a sudden, drastic, and enormous change. Experience too bids us take warning from what has occurred before.

The various Socialist societies which have been formed from time to time in America during the present century, have none of them been attended with conspicuous success. Life in them has been found to be almost universally a dull, colourless, prosaic affair. In no case do we receive enthusiastic accounts therefrom. And if we turn our faces backward and examine the Social Revolutions that occurred in France in 1792, 1848, and 1871, we shall find striking object-lessons of the folly and failure of all attempts to introduce Socialism suddenly. Frightful bloodshed, frightful misery, debt, and confusion were the sole results in all three instances.

Turgot and Malesherbes were two large-hearted, liberal-minded statesmen in France who, like Lord Rosebery and Gladstone to-day, were in 1789 the unconscious initiators of Revolution, and this is what they said when they saw the melancholy results:—

“Turgot and I,” said Malesherbes, “were very honest men, well-informed and passionately desirous of the public good. Nevertheless, I avow, that knowing man-

kind only from books, and wanting the judgment necessary for conducting public affairs, we conducted them ill. *We wished to govern the French, not as they were, but such as we wished them to be, and such as our hearts imagined they were. We were misled by our zeal.* Without perceiving it, without intending it, we have contributed to the Revolution." *

Such was the confession of the early unconscious pioneers of the French Revolution, and such will no doubt be eventually that of many well-meaning folk, who are now parleying with Socialism at the present day.

"Revolutionary movements always go on increasing in violence. The originators of the movement are quickly left behind. They are thought lukewarm, and are soon looked upon as traitors. They are replaced by the more fanatical, who in their turn are pushed aside, till the final abyss is reached, to which wild revolutionary logic inevitably tends." † Or, as Alison puts it, "The impatience of the inferior agents too frequently outstrips the more prudent designs of the chiefs." The tail in fact waggles the dog.

Doubtless many Socialists are actuated by pure motives; but it would be the merest folly to suppose that all of them are. We have in recent days heard something said by John Burns about Tom Mann's "Tidal Intellect"; and by Tom Mann, in turn, about John Burns' "bullying bounce and self-conceit"; and

* Alison's "History of Europe."

† Lavellaye's "Socialism of To-day."

if we go back to the earlier days of Socialism, we shall find even stronger evidence of the self-interest that is to be found amongst its leaders and adherents.

Louis Blanc, one of the principal leaders of the Socialist Revolution in France in 1848, writes as follows of his friends:—"Along with the most laudable aspirations, the most elevated impulses, *base envy raised its head*, a love of disorder for its own sake, a hatred of unjust men in power, rather than a hatred of injustice itself, *and under the pretence of destroying tyranny, the desire merely to replace it by another tyranny.*"*

And General Rossel, the commander of the Socialist Workmen's Army in Paris during the Communist rising of 1871, says much the same thing:—"I was in search of Liberty," he writes, "and I found Privilege established at every street corner. Conceit, want of discipline, and drunkenness were the companions of the Communists in the Revolution of 1871. The Central Committee went in for orgies, champagne, and the rest of it. . . . The Commune had but few friends in Europe; but, to do it justice, it did little to deserve any. The remembrance of all those *presumptuous* Revolutionists, devoid of all study or energy, is a nightmare to me. The workmen of Paris are intelligent and clever, I know; but that does not suffice. For the treatment of such serious questions as the management of political affairs, a deep and sound intellectual culture is necessary.

The instruction of our workmen is not only insufficient,

* Louis Blanc's "History of Ten Years."

but ill directed. They study with good faith the works of those philosophical day-dreamers who promise them a paradise on earth ; they are desirous of suddenly transforming the organisation of labour, of getting rid of the masters, and of suppressing the intermediate class ; but they are not strong enough to replace the masters and the go-betweens, and three-fourths of their time they are the mere dupes of their innovating experiments. Incapable of managing their own affairs, they are still more incapable of managing public affairs."*

Such is the independent testimony given by a leading Socialist as to the character of the Parisian Communists, and the same might be said of the Socialists to-day.

But wherever the Socialist spirit manifests itself, either in the past or present, we find the same characteristics displayed. Along with most laudable aspirations and noble impulses, we find *Envy*, *Presumption*, *Self-conceit*, *Misrepresentation*, and a want of practical capacity quite fatal to any enterprise. But of this enough.

Having thus, at some length, shown Socialism to be false in its premises, unscrupulous in its methods, and unpractical in its aims, I will now conclude. Before doing so, however, I should like to say that it has been my endeavour throughout the pages of this little book to be as fair and impartial as possible. Truly can I say that I have "nothing extenuated, naught have I set down in malice." If I have here and there boldly called a

* Rossel's "Papers on the Commune."

spade a spade, and plainly accused agitators of disseminating lies, I have only done so when absolutely driven to it; for there is much in Socialism to sympathise with, and I would gladly deal with their cause with all fairness possible.

Besides, I too, like yourself, "Nunquam," am a "man of nervous temperament, and the common sights of the street are very terrible to me. Their dreadful, ghastly, shameful facts of vice, shame, and misery have long seared themselves on my heart," and I long with all my heart to put an end to them.

But in Socialism I find no real, solid, *lasting* cure for this misery. Ardent and impetuous Socialists like yourself will doubtless ask me angrily—Then what alternative proposals have you to offer?

In reply to which very natural question I should reply as follows:—"My impatient and hot-headed friends, I have no other remedy to propose than that of steady practical Reform, such as has been herein from time to time indicated."

But if lasting benefit is to result therefrom, reform in the laws of the land, State-aid, or what is now called Socialistic legislation, must be accompanied by reform in the individual habits and characters of the people. Ardent, hopeful, hurrying, young Socialists must earn the meaning of Tennyson's words, "Raw haste, half-sister to delay," and make sure, that in pressing forward new legislation, they are advancing on solid ground.

They must learn, too, sooner or later, that the true

end of social effort and aim is not Individualism, not Socialism, but a happy mixture and blending of the two.

It is in such practical measures as Work for Unemployed, Protection of our Agriculture, Poor Law Reform, Graduated Taxation, State-aided Emigration, Old-Age Pensions, Duty on Speculation, Compulsory Purchase of bad landlords' property at fair, not full valuation, and Regulations respecting marriage,—it is by legislation of this kind that the English workman will receive most lasting, solid benefit; not by wild, impossible, harum-scarum proposals for making everybody alike and equal.

Finally, in wishing you, "Nunquam," and my readers a cordial farewell, I cannot do better than conclude by quoting the following eminently broad-minded and sensible words of Frederick Harrison:—"As to what is called Socialism," he says, "there is no doubt a good deal of wild and dangerous nonsense proposed; and men of some considerable influence are heard to recommend schemes of amazing folly and ignorance. But much of what is called Socialism is a perfectly healthy reaction against the pragmatistical prejudices that profess to be Political Economy. That Socialism throws up a mass of crude and suicidal nostrums is true enough. But these must be met by the practical sense of our public leaders and a more serious education of the people. Socialism will be our ruin, no doubt, if politicians, in the race for office, bid against each other in

truckling to the first ignorant cry of the hour. We shall indeed despair of our country when all our leaders and teachers descend to be nothing but demagogues. There is a safe and a dangerous Socialism before us. And of all our public wants none is so urgent as wise teaching about the limits and the consequences of these two."

Such teaching as this it has been my endeavour in the preceding pages to supply.

We all know that a great Religious Reformation took place long years since in the sixteenth century, when, in the heat and impulse of reaction, much that was beneficial to the spiritual life of Europe occurred, alongside with much that was equally destructive of it.

In the Industrial and Economic Reformation we now seem about entering upon, let us take warning from the exceedingly doubtful character of the religious one, and determine to show by our firm sense of Justice and Right that we moderns are above all the mean feelings of Heat, Haste, Passion, and Revenge which so sadly tarnished the fair fame of the early Reformers, and that we only desire to deal fairly between rich and poor alike. Let us, in God's name, be Just.

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